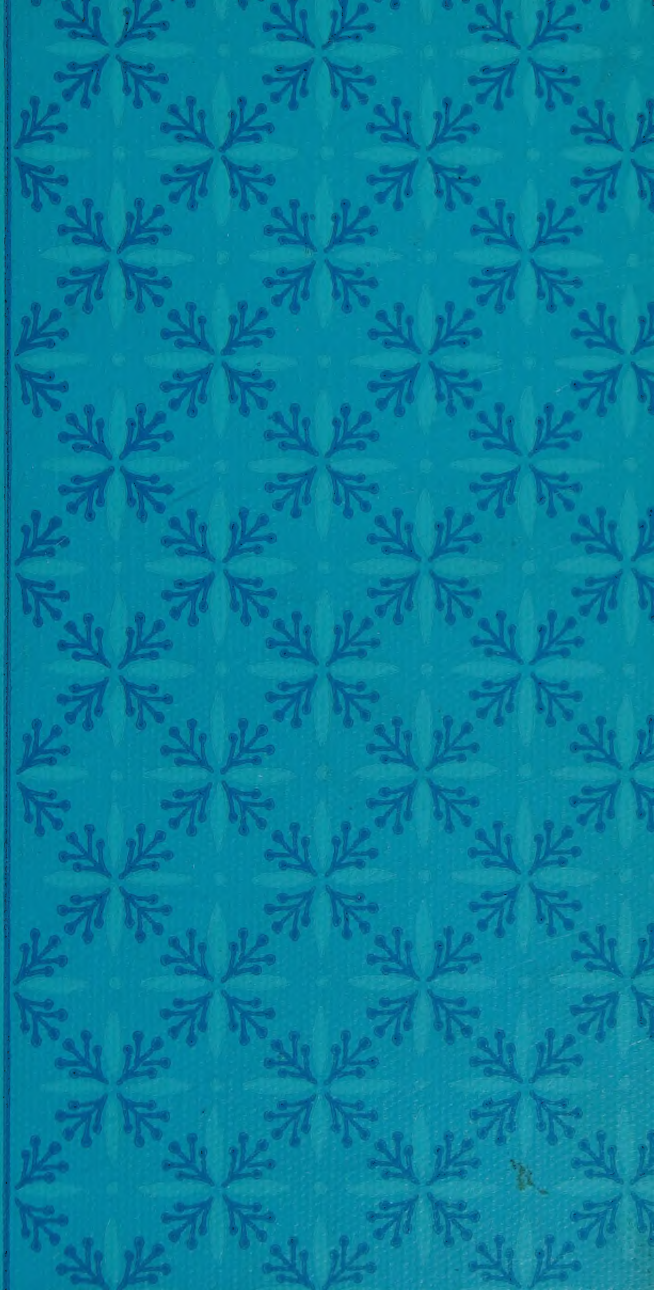

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WOMEN IN ENGLISH ECONOMIC HISTORY

THE WOMAN'S NEVER-ENDING TASK

WOMEN IN ENGLISH ECONOMIC HISTORY

BY

F. W. TICKNER, D.Lit., B.Sc. (Econ.)

Author of
"A Social and Industrial History of England,"
"Europe since 1789," etc.

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TO

ENGLISHWOMEN GENERALLY

AND TO

ONE ENGLISHWOMAN

IN PARTICULAR

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WOMEN IN ENGLISH ECONOMIC HISTORY

PART I.—THE AGE OF THE CRAFT WORKERS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE important part played by the women of England in helping to win the Great War brought home to many people, who seem never to have realised it before, the fact that the women and girls of England were not only sharers in its social life, but were also a very important section of its industrial workers in many branches of industry. But even then it seemed to be assumed by many persons that for women to engage in industry on any large scale, apart from the all-important part played by the housewife and house worker, was quite a modern idea. This book is an attempt to show how wrong this idea is; it tries to tell in simple fashion what exactly has been woman's place and woman's share in English life and English industry at all periods of the nation's story, from the earliest times to the present day.

One reason for the lack of knowledge on this subject is, no doubt, that the historians and chroniclers of the past have paid but little attention to the every-day

life and work of the people of the nation; military, and naval, and political struggles have occupied a very large proportion of their pages; and in these things men, rather than women, have occupied the stage. Hence the life and actions of the ordinary worker, whether man or woman, have been passed by in silence; only the doings of women famous in public life—Joan of Arc, Queen Elizabeth, Mary of Scots, and so on—have found a place in history. But to-day we are very much concerned to know more of the past and present life and work of the people of the nation; historians are now busying themselves with this aspect of history; and in that life and work the share of the woman has always been a very important one.

Some of the changes in the nation's life and work, indeed, are so continuous and so important that we may well consider them for a few moments here, and so prepare the way for their presence throughout the pages of this book. One of the most important of all is the growth of the principle of *division of labour*. Very much of the progress that has been made in the story of mankind is due to this fact. Far away in the past, in the days before history, it is probable that prehistoric man and woman worked side by side without there being much difference in the tasks in which they were engaged. But in time, a separation of duties began to creep in; and with the discovery of the control and use of fire, the woman remained near the cave or other resting-place with the children and watched the fire while the man roamed further afield as he hunted for food and clothing. So started a more settled mode of life,

and with it came the beginnings of agriculture, sewing, weaving, pottery-making, etc., all of which in the first instance must have owed much of their development to the efforts of the women.

In the same way at every stage of later human development there is room for this same principle to find a place. In the early history of an industrial operation it is usual for one person to carry the work through in all its branches, from the commencement with the raw material to the completion of the finished article. The early shoemaker started with the leather, and finished with a completed shoe; he may still do this in some country towns and villages, but in a modern boot factory the boot passes through the hands of quite a large number of different persons before it is finished. Many a girl at home makes herself a blouse, which she completes by her own unaided effort, it may be without even using a sewing-machine; but in the blouse factory machines are in constant use, and the work is divided so that each girl is responsible only for a portion of the work on a blouse; one girl may be responsible for the cutting-out, but another for the fitting, a third may be a machinist and the fourth an embroideress, while the blouse may then pass on to the presser, and so to the maker of button-holes. In the same way the making of a pair of corsets in a corset factory calls for quite a large number of distinct operations by different girls before the corsets are finished and ready for the market.

All this division of labour is characteristic of industry as it develops; and is essential to its development. It is easy to see some of the great advantages

that come from it. A girl who is continually engaged upon one operation naturally acquires skill in that particular branch of the whole task, with a corresponding saving of time and lessening of the strain which comes from turning from one kind of labour to another. It is possible, too, to choose girls according to their skill, and so fit them as well as possible to the particular branch of work they can do best, and in this way to increase the production in quantity and lessen the amount of time required for it. Production on this larger scale leads also to the increased use of machinery with a lessening in many cases of the strain on the worker, and with machinery come greater opportunities of invention and so of still better machinery and still less strain. Incidentally, too, the use of machinery tends to lighten the labour of the task, and with a machine, women and girls may undertake tasks performed only by men in the days when they could be performed only by heavy manual labour.

But, on the other hand, division of labour has its serious drawbacks as very many workers know. Making a part, instead of a whole, may increase specialised skill and speed up production, but it is likely also to make work monotonous and narrowing in its influence. The girl at home making her jumper for herself will naturally be pleased with the jumper when it is finished, and will look with pride upon her handiwork; the girl who is responsible only for machining or embroidering jumpers in large quantities can scarcely feel the same thrill of pleasure in her work and its result. And the machine tends also in the same direction, as it

lessens the worker's individuality and turns out its products by the hundred, all according to the same pattern.

Another important change we shall have to consider is the steady rise in the *standard of comfort* of the people as time goes on. Houses have been improved in very many ways, better and more varied food, and dress, and other things have been introduced; very many things which we look upon as necessities, things which we should find it a great hardship to do without, were either rare luxuries to the people of early times, or else were non-existent. In the Middle Ages a pound of soap cost three-halfpence, while eggs were twenty-five for a penny, and a goose could be bought for twopence-halfpenny, and a woman worked a day for a penny. At this price it must have been quite a luxury to be able to use soap. Three hundred years ago our English forefathers managed very well without tea or coffee; sugar was looked upon as a very rare spice, and was considered a very great luxury. In very many respects the comforts which surround us in the homes of to-day are greater than those of the homes of the nobles of the early days of our history; and we have countless things at our disposal which were quite unknown to them; though, being unknown to them, no doubt they managed, on the whole, to get along very well without them.

With this rise in the standard of comfort, and with the grouping together of people into towns, much of the work formerly done in the house itself has gone out of it into factories and workshops to be done there. People are apt to forget that a large proportion

of the work done in this country is in the nature of services rendered by some persons to others, who must pay for them, instead of doing them themselves as their forefathers did. Jams and preserves, pickles, biscuits, cakes and confectionery generally, the blouses we have already spoken of, all these and many other things were formerly made in the homes of the people by the housewife and her daughters; now with the division of labour they are, in many cases, produced on the large scale outside the home; just as many portions of household work are now becoming organised in similar fashion, and the vacuum cleaner, window cleaner, laundry worker, etc., come along at intervals to do things in the home or for the home, which would give our grandmothers a shock to think of, if they were here to realise the change. Indeed, so far have we progressed, that in London at any rate, step-cleaning is becoming a specialised industry and a girl goes round at intervals for no other purpose than to clean the step, probably because in these days of a single house containing several families it is easier to get the work done in this way, than to divide it up among the householders themselves.

In very many ways, then, nowadays people buy services, which formerly they performed for themselves; and this growth of services comes into town life at a much earlier date than it invades the life of the country folk. Hence we must be prepared to find at all ages in our story that in these respects it is the town with its large and more varied population that leads the way, and the country, with its more homogeneous and more conservative people,

that lags behind. At the same time we must realise that the women who are at work in the homes, providing food and comforts, and, perhaps, clothing of many kinds for their husbands, and children, and themselves, are part of this great army of workers whose services are their main contribution to the continuity of English life. This is sufficiently obvious if we consider what would happen if their services were withdrawn; for then all the work they do, all the goods of all kinds they produce would have to be provided in some other way.

Another change which we shall find creeping in gradually as time goes on is the increasing importance of money in industry, or, as we sometimes say, the importance of capital. As we go through the pages of this book we shall do well to avoid thinking of capital as being money exclusively. Money is one form of capital, and a very important one too, but there are many others also: the buildings in which the work is carried on; the machines with which it is performed, all the apparatus of production and distribution, in fact, is also capital, and plays its part in the production of the *wealth* which is the object of industrial production; remembering again that wealth means not only money, but also those goods or services which are capable of being exchanged for money or other goods or services, and the well-being of all concerned in the industry, and the well-being of the community generally. There are many other forms of capital, too, which must not be omitted; such are initiative and enterprise on the part of all grades of workers; skill in production; the genius of the inventor,

improver or adapter; the ability which managers and directors bring to the management and direction of the business; the ability of the buyers and sellers in the enterprise, and so on. Every worker of every grade, each reader of this book, possesses something of capital of one or other of these kinds, and in this sense may be termed a capitalist. But the term capitalist is commonly employed to denote a person possessing money capital; that is, money which is being used in such a way as to produce interest or some kind of return from the use of it. Even in this meaning of the word, however, capitalists are very much more widespread in number than is generally supposed; for modern industry is organised essentially upon capitalistic lines, and the capital is very great and very widely spread. With the growth of joint-stock companies in the nineteenth century, it has been possible for workers with only small savings to invest them in industrial and commercial concerns, or in co-operative societies, or similar organisations and thus to become capitalists themselves. Trade unions, friendly societies, or similar organisations hold and invest large sums of money, subscribed for special purposes by large bodies of people acting together. But at first money capital plays only a small part, and skill in craftsmanship is more important, as is also a good connection of buyers, *customers* in the real sense of the word, whose custom it is always to go to one producer of the commodity and to buy from him when they are in need. Later on, capital is more necessary, not only in the form of money, but in the form of tools, machinery, and so on, and industry changes accordingly.

All these and many other changes have meant great alterations in the nature of industry and in the ways in which industry is carried out, and have influenced in very many ways the lives and habits of the English people. We shall see the progress of these changes and their results as we read through the pages of this book.

CHAPTER II

WOMEN AT WORK IN THE COUNTRY

LET us begin, then, by going back in mind to the England of the Middle Ages, the England of the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries. Life was much simpler then than it is now. England was an agricultural country, and most of the people lived in little villages scattered about the countryside. The wealth of the country was in its fields and agriculture; and industrial life had not yet gained a hold upon the English people. A large portion of the country was woodland, and waste moorland, and bog, and fen. There were certainly not as many as three million people in the whole of England in the thirteenth century; there are more than that now in the County of London alone; while the population of England and Wales is nearly thirty-eight millions. Apart from London the towns usually had less than 4,000 people in them; London itself had no more than about 25,000 people within its walls; now there are twenty-five towns in the country each with a population of more than 150,000 folk, and more than seventy-nine per cent. of the whole population is living in the towns.

The earliest English folk, indeed, had been almost solely occupied in agriculture. They disliked the towns, and when they conquered the country they either destroyed the fifty towns which the highly civilised

Romans had built, or left them to decay. But very soon towns and town life began again to develop, though their growth was very slow, for industrial life had not yet gained a hold upon the English people, and trade grew but slowly in the towns where the agriculturists were a very important section of the community, and each town was surrounded by its open fields in which the townsmen worked, so much so that craftsmen were sometimes forbidden to pursue their ordinary work at harvest time, and were compelled to help get in the harvest instead, and courts of law were suspended until the harvest was saved.

But towns were few, and most of the English people were tillers of the soil; working on the land, however, in very different fashion from agricultural workers nowadays. For in these times the land was shared out in quarter- or half-acre strips among the people in different parts of the village, and all the cattle, sheep, and pigs grazed together on the common pasture land, or in the woods that surrounded each village. Much time was lost in getting from one part of a person's land to another, and the various tools used in working the land were rude and clumsy. The consequence was that the villagers' work was very slow and occupied all the hours from sunrise to sunset, and the crops they managed to get as a result of all their labour were very poor ones. In spite of all their work, too, they often managed to get only enough food to keep them through the winter; and there was never very much of their produce to offer for sale. Some of the produce went to the owner of the land, the lord of the manor, as

payment for the land, and then the rest was used to provide food and clothing for themselves; they farmed for subsistence, and not for markets and profits. Indeed at first roads were so few and poor, and communication between different districts so difficult, that the ordinary people never left the village in which they were born, but stayed there throughout the whole of their lives, working on the land from day to day and from year to year.

Now in all this work the women and girls took a share. To begin with, there was very much work to do in the house, though it was very different from the sort of work that is done in an ordinary English house in the country to-day. Perhaps it would be as well first to get an idea of the kind of house in which these forefathers of ours actually lived. Imagine a long and narrow building with low walls of mud and plaster, and a highly-pitched roof of straw and reed thatch. There is no chimney, but smoke is issuing from a hole in the thatch. Near the end of one side is a door divided into two parts, and with the upper part open, if not the whole door. The dogs and the poultry are running in and out; possibly the pig may be doing the same. We cross the threshold and find that quite a large portion of the house contains the stalls for the cows and the oxen, which at this time were in general use in place of horses. The living part of the house consists of one room only. It has a floor of earth mixed with lime and trodden hard by the feet of its inhabitants. Over the floor are strewn rushes, which seem to be in a very dirty state. A fire of wooden logs is burning on a large flat hearthstone in the centre of the floor,

underneath the hole in the roof which serves as a chimney. There is only one small window, and that has no glass in it. A piece of oiled linen rag and a wooden shutter which can be closed and fastened on the inside serve instead. There is very little furniture, just a few benches without backs and a few three-legged stools such as are now used for milking purposes serve as seats, with possibly some small pieces of tree-trunks or even large stones. The table is a long board on trestles, and is tucked away in a corner when meal-time is over. The food, the flour, and the few household utensils are packed away in long chests or coffers, whose lids serve as seats also, or even as beds at night-time, unless the folk prefer to lie down on the rushes or climb up to the straw stored away along the rafters above the cow-stalls. Needless to say there are no pictures on the rough, uneven walls, nor is there any ceiling to the room. It is open to the inside of the thatch like any modern barn; one sees the smoke curling along under the thatch as it finds its way out, and long festoons of blackened cobwebs hang from the rafters.

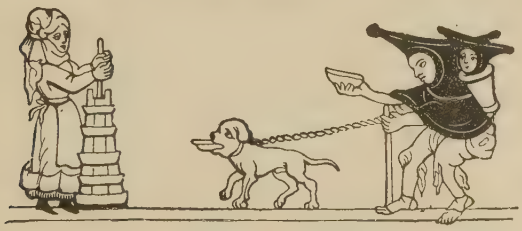
It is evident that much of the work which falls to the lot of the modern housewife was absent here. Here is an inventory of the household possessions of a villein or countryman as late as the fifteenth century: one brass pot, two masselyng (*i.e.* brass) dishes; a mattock worth sixpence; a plough-coulter worth eightpence; a ploughshare worth fourpence; a salting-tub for the meat worth eightpence; two casks worth tenpence, and a quarter measure. No carpets to sweep or beat, no floors to scrub, no furniture to dust or polish, no pictures or windows

to clean; and very little washing up either, for instead of plates each person had a round piece of bread (a trencher) cut from a loaf, and on this he placed his meat, while he cut it with his own knife and used his fingers as a fork. Wooden spoons, rudely made at home, there were, and horns for drinking purposes, but not very much besides.

How, then, did the housewife occupy her time? Well, in the first place we must remember that her village contained no shops, and the household had to be fed. The woman was therefore the universal provider for the household. She might have to start by grinding some of the corn brought from the fields at harvest time, and threshed on the threshing floor, which usually divided the houseplace from the cow-stalls. At first this grinding was done by rubbing the corn between two stones in a quern—it is still done in this way in the remoter parts of Scotland and Ireland; after a time there were windmills, or even water-mills, to which the corn could be taken. This flour had then to be made into bread or cake or puddings for the household use, and baked in round cakes around the hearth, or if it were a pudding boiled in a large pot suspended from a tripod or supported on iron posts over the fire. The food of the villager was lacking in variety, and in years of bad harvests in quantity. The fact that the various kinds of meat are known by Norman names suggests that the Saxon peasant used them but sparingly; it is the words peas, beans, bread, eggs and honey which are of Saxon origin, and these things doubtless formed a large part of his food. *Piers Plowman* tells us that he has no money to buy pullets, pigs, or geese,

nor has he salt bacon or lean fowls, but he can offer two green cheeses, a little curds and cream, an unleavened cake, a loaf of beans and bran, and some leeks and parsley. Much of their bread must have been of the unleavened variety, but from the first the preference was for white bread, though black rye bread and bread made of a mixture of rye and wheaten flour were also in use.

Not only had the housewife to make the bread and



A WOMAN CHURNING

The beggar is approaching to ask an alms. (Fourteenth century)

cook the food, she had also to make the drink of the household — beer from the barley, mead from the honey, cider from the apples or perry from the pears. Every girl learnt this important art and practised it too, for her mother was often busy with the father in the fields; and the wedding feast, prepared in large part by the bride herself, was a proof of her ability; the wedding cake especially was the sign of what she could do in this direction. Butter and cheese, too, were made in every household; and at the proper season there was fruit to be preserved and stored away; and honey, the only sweetening substance they possessed, to be gathered from the beehives in the garden.

Nor did the woman's duties in this particular direction end here, for in these days of poor farming the English agriculturist had not yet learned the art of growing those crops which could be used as food for animals in the winter months, and so when Michaelmas came it was necessary to kill all the surplus stock, and the meat obtained was salted down by her for use throughout the winter. Salt was scarce, and often it was necessary for her to improve the taste of the badly-salted food (chiefly pork and bacon) by the addition of tasty herbs from another part of the garden.

The housewife was also the doctor of the family, and might have to spend some time in preparing bitter concoctions of the medicinal herbs which she grew in the garden or plucked in field and ditch. But it was not only her business to feed and doctor the family, it was also part of her duty to see that it was clothed. Each May, after the sheep-shearing was finished, the wool was brought into the house to be combed, spun into yarn, and then woven into cloth. Cleaning and spinning, at any rate, were the work of the women and the girls, and weaving also sometimes. At first the spinning was done by fastening the wool to a distaff (a stick which was held above

A MEDIÆVAL PICTURE OF ADAM AND EVE
Eve has a distaff and whorl for spinning yarn

the head with the left hand) and using a whorl (a piece of wood or stone shaped something like a top), which with the help of the fingers of the right hand gave the necessary spin to the wool as it was pulled out from the distaff.

A coarse linen yarn also was made from flax, or even the fibres of nettles might be used. When the yarn had been woven into cloth by the housewife or her husband, it was then converted into clothing or into household articles, such as the boardcloths or tablecloths used by them. Hemp too was a useful source of yarn and clothing material; Shakespeare makes Puck speak of the rude mechanics of Athens, as "hempen homespuns," and Bottom and his friends are really Elizabethan craftsmen. All this work was carried out, of necessity, in a slow and laborious manner; in those days the girl who hoped before long to become a married woman (she might be married at fourteen or fifteen years of age) had perforce to start early to lay in a stock of materials she would require in her house; there were no shops at which to buy these things; a pedlar would appear in the village at intervals as time went on, and sell her pretty ribbons and so on, but that was all. So that the "bottom drawer" was a real necessity in these days of old, and a girl began at an early age to make provision for her own home. Some of you may have seen examples of the smock-frock of the village labourer of fifty years ago, with its beautifully-worked ornamentation on chest and arms. It was such a garment as this, girdled with rope or leather, that was the usual outer covering of the countryman in these early days. His wife wore a tightly-fitting

undergown with long loose sleeves, and a loose short-sleeved gown above, girdled at the waist.

Other little occupations included the plaiting of straw into ropes, collars, etc., for the oxen of the ploughing team, and the making of rushlight candles. The rushes had to be gathered and peeled, and then the pith was dipped into melted fat or beeswax a number of times to allow sufficient fat to adhere to make the candle thick enough.

WOMEN'S DRESS IN SAXON TIMES

In these days much of the work fell to the share of the boys and girls, and the husband, too, shared in the work of the household to a much greater extent than he usually does nowadays. There was no clear division in the work of husband and wife, and so the man helped in the house and the woman played a very important part in many of the farming operations; and the work of men, boys and girls left her able to supervise and share in many of these

tasks. The care of pigs and poultry and the milking of the cows also fell to her lot. Winnowing the corn after it had been threshed out with a flail was usually a woman's occupation. It was done by throwing the beaten corn up into the air a spadeful at a time, in the space between door and window, so that the draught would carry away the chaff. At thatching times, too, the woman would choose and arrange the straw, and carry it up the rick or house to the thatcher. There was plenty of work to be done in the fields at almost every season of the year. A woman could goad on the oxen of the plough, or break down the lumpy soil with a mattock, or help in gathering the hay, or tie up the sheaves of corn as she followed the reaper in the fields. Here is a picture left us by a poet of the fourteenth century:

WOMAN FEEDING POULTRY

From the Luttrell Psalter (c. 1340)

Note that the woman retains her distaff, for every spare moment must be spent in spinning.

I saw a simple man me by · upon the plow bending,
His coat was all a clout · that cary [1] was y-called;
His hood was full of holes · and his hair poked out,
With his knobbly shoon · clouted full thick;
His toes peeped in and out · as he the land trod,
His hose overhung his hocks · on every side,
All smothered in dirt · as he the plow followed;

[1] A rough coarse cloth.

Two mittens just as poor · made all of clouts,[1]
The fingers were worn out · and full of dirt hung.
This poor man besmired himself in dirt · almost to the ankle,
Four heifers went before him · that had become feeble,
Men could count all their ribs · so rueful they were.
His wife walked him with · with a long goad,
In a short-cut coat · cut very high,
Wrapped in a winnowing sheet · to ward her from the weather,
Barefoot on the bare ice · so that the blood flowed.
And at the land's end lay · a little wooden bowl,
And therein lay a little child · lapped in clouts,
And twins of two years old · upon another side,
And all they sung a song · that was sorrowful to hear,
They cried all one cry · a careful[2] note.

There were times, too, when the ordinary work on the strips of land had to be left to the housewife to perform, for the land was held by the villagers (villeins, as many of them were termed) on condition that they worked upon the land of the lord of the manor, the owner of the village, for a certain number of days in each week, with a number of additional days when there was much to be done on the land. From this servile work the wife was always free, and when her husband was called away to the work of the overlord, she would take his place and do the work he would otherwise have done himself upon his own land.

The life of the housewife must obviously have been a very full one, and in most cases a very hard one too. The writer of *Piers Plowman* indeed sums it up for us in a few lines that are well worth quoting:

Also themselves · suffer much hunger
And woe in winter time · with waking a-nights,
To rise by the bedside · to rock the cradle,
Both to card and to comb · to mend and to wash,

[1] Rags. [2] Wretched, miserable.

To rub and to reel · rushes to peel
That pity 'tis to narrate · or in rime to shew
The woe of these women · that dwell in the cottages.

And though the housewife, alone of the family, was free from work upon the manorial estate, she was in many cases compelled by the lord of the manor to remarry within a certain time of her husband's death, though she could escape remarriage on payment of a fine. In like fashion the daughters of a villein or other servile tenant could not marry without their overlord's consent, and the payment of a small fine in addition.

For girls were useful, as they still are in country places, in watching that the cattle did not stray too far from the common into the woodland and waste land, or get into the growing crops. We have all read of the goose-girl, whose duty it was to look after the flock of geese. In cases where there was more of this kind of help than was necessary, the girls might go away to work for other persons. Many a girl became a dairymaid, and as such was responsible for the milk, cream, butter and cheese, as well as for the care of the poultry and young pigs; and for this work she would be paid six shillings a year, with allowance of food and drink and other things. Or young women might engage in field work, such as bird-scaring, planting beans, weeding corn, haymaking, sheep-shearing, carting and spreading manure, or harvesting, at the rate of three farthings or a penny a day; though after the Black Death, in 1349, they could get twopence and threepence a day, for labour was very much scarcer and prices rose in consequence.

Now when we talk about wages such as these we may very easily be misled as to their value. The important thing about money wages is not so much their amount expressed in pounds, shillings and pence, as it is the quantity of material that can be bought with them. Everyone has to make a clear distinction between *nominal wages*—that is, the wages stated in money values, and *real wages*—that is, the wages stated in terms of the food, clothing, etc., they will buy. We have seen a very clear instance of this in the changes in values of wages and commodities in the last few years.

We know in many cases from the records what were the market values of certain commodities at the time of which we are writing, and this knowledge helps us in estimating the real value of the wages we shall mention from time to time. For example, in London, in the year 1313, it was possible to buy a fat ox for about twenty-four shillings, a sheep for twenty pence, a goose for twopence-halfpenny, two chickens or three pigeons or twenty-four eggs for a penny; and the sum of four pounds would provide enough furniture for housekeeping. About the middle of the thirteenth century cheap linen cloths sold at about fourpence an ell, while the best qualities would fetch over half-a-crown an ell; woollen cloth varied in value from a shilling a yard to about three-and-fourpence. Before the Black Death came, an agricultural labourer with the help of his wife earned about £2 7s. 10d. a year; after the Black Death this wage increased to £3 15s. a year; and it has been calculated that the cost of living at the same time was about £3 4s. 9d., so that there was a

balance on the right side. But as we see the total wages are low in money value, while the purchasing power of the money is high. No wonder folk thought of values in terms of pence in those days as we do in terms of shillings and pounds now; or that the coin in commonest use in the thirteenth century was the silver penny, with subdivisions into halfpennies and farthings. Both wages and prices were rising throughout the Middle Ages; it has been estimated that between 1350 and 1500 wages increased by about 125 per cent. What is perhaps more interesting for us here is to compare the wages of women with those of men engaged in much the same class of operations. A statute of 1388 (for in those days there were frequent attempts to fix wages by statute) ordered that shepherds and carters should be paid ten shillings a year, ploughmen seven shillings, swineherds six shillings, women labourers and dairymaids six shillings, all without clothing or other reward. In 1444 the rates were to be: carters and shepherds twenty shillings, with four shillings for clothing, and food in addition; an ordinary agricultural manservant fifteen shillings, with three-and-fourpence for clothing, and food also; but a woman-servant ten shillings, with four shillings for clothing, and food in addition, while a child was to receive six shillings wages and three shillings for clothes. Harvest pay for reapers and carters was to be threepence a day with food or fivepence without, while ordinary labourers, men or women, had twopence-halfpenny with food or fourpence half-penny without. In 1495 a statute fixed the wage of ordinary labourers at sixteen-and-eightpence a

year with four shillings for clothing for men, and ten shillings and four shillings for women.

Under these conditions, then, and in these ways, our forefathers worked on from day to day and week to week. Their hours were long and arduous and left them but little opportunity for rest and relaxation, except on Sundays and holy-days or holidays. From March to September the hours of labour were from five in the morning till seven or eight at night, with half an hour for breakfast and an hour and a half

(*a*) (*b*)

CHILDREN AT PLAY IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY
(*a*) Hoodman Blind. (*b*) Spinning Tops.

for dinner and sleep; and from September to March during the hours of daylight with no time for the after-dinner nap. But it was the custom to stop work for half a day on Saturdays and on the eves of holy-days, while a holy-day meant a day's freedom from labour; and these holy-days came on the average at the rate of one per week. On Sunday afternoon, too, they might rest or find means of amusement; and when holidays came, as come they did at Christmas or Easter or Whitsuntide, they left their work and had a time of merriment; though feasting and drinking played so large a part in this that here too

the housewife and her daughters must have been kept busily employed. The greatest day for the womenfolk was the second Tuesday after Easter—Hocktide, as it was called. On that day many of them went out with a rope which they held across the roads to catch the men, from whom they demanded toll. The girls and boys, too, had their parties and other holidays. May-day, harvest time, and so on, were happy days for them.

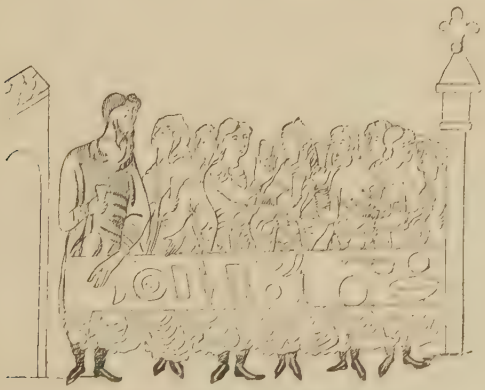
CHAPTER III

THE WIVES AND DAUGHTERS OF THE GENTLEFOLK

So far, however, we have concerned ourselves only with the poorer members of the community. Let us now turn our attention to the richer folk, the great barons and landowners and country gentry of the time, and see how their wives and daughters fared. In these days the division of the people into grades of society was much simpler than it is now. Roughly speaking, there were but three grades at this time—the priests, who looked after the religious welfare of the community; the knights and gentlefolk, whose duty it was to protect the land and its inhabitants, by force of arms if necessary; and the labourers, who produced the food required by themselves and the other two classes of society.

The knightly class of landowners lived in the villages in what we call manor-houses. These were much more imposing residences than the poor huts we described in the previous chapter. But even in these there was but little of the comfort of many smaller houses of to-day. Most of the folk lived together in one large long hall, which constituted the main portion of the manor-house. Here they dined, here they slept, here, on wet days at any rate, they spent what leisure time they had. In fine weather they could escape from one another by getting out of doors and working or playing there; otherwise,

only the lady of the house and her maids and children could get away from the hall into a smaller room, the solar or bower, which was set aside for their use. As in the villein's hut, so here in the manor hall, the fireplace was an open hearthstone near the middle of the room, with a hole in the roof above, having a covering with louvred sides through which the smoke could escape. At the end of the hall near the



AN EARLY ENGLISH DINNER-TABLE

solar was a raised platform, the dais; this was reserved for the lord and lady and their chief guests. Two rows of movable tables, running lengthwise along the hall, were used by the retainers and other servants, and order of precedence was carefully observed. About half-way down the long table was the salt-cellar (salt in those days was dearer and more difficult to obtain than it is now), and to sit above the salt was a privilege very much valued, as it marked one out as a person of some importance as compared with the inferior servants, who sat at the bottom of

the room. Moreover, in these days one had to be careful *to be worth one's salt.* Food was plentiful, and was usually highly flavoured with ginger, pepper, cinnamon, cloves and herbs, and coloured with saffron or other vegetable dyes. It included peacocks and cranes, herons and other birds caught while hunting and hawking, as well as huge joints of meat and the boar's head we usually associate with Christmastide. Meat was served by the pages and other servants on the spits on which it was roasted; and usually each gentleman carved for himself and a lady with the knife or dagger which he always carried; perhaps, also, there was only one plate for the two of them. Each lady had a spoon, which she cleaned for herself between the courses, and fingers were used instead of forks. The absence of forks made stews and dishes prepared with minced or pounded meat very popular. All dined together; it was considered very bad manners to dine in private, and the hours of dining were different from what they are now. In these days people rose with the sun, and went to bed when it was dark. There is an old Norman-French rhyme, after the fashion of our "Early to bed and early to rise," which said

> Rising at five and dining at nine,
> Supper at five and to bed at nine,
> Will make a man live to be ninety and nine;

and this rhyme teaches us the times of their meals.

At the end of the room farthest away from the solar and the dais was the main entrance to the hall. This was usually covered by a screen with two entrance doors in it and a gallery above, in which the minstrels could sit and play while meals were

served. We can still see such screens in the College halls at Oxford and Cambridge, and in the halls of the Inns of Court or of the City Companies in London. At this end of the hall, too, were the kitchen and other rooms attached to the manor-house, such as the buttery where wine was kept, the pantry for bread, the larder for salted meat, the sewery for the dishes, linen, and other table material, the laundry, and so on.

Such words as pantry, laundry, and the rest are obviously of French origin, and point to the fact that the inhabitants of the manor-houses were in many cases the Normans who helped William I. to conquer England, or their descendants. Hence the many double names given to things of household use by Norman and Englishman respectively; the English cow, calf, sheep and pig became beef, veal, mutton and pork when placed upon the Norman table; just as table itself was the Norman equivalent of the English board, and chair of the English stool or settle.

All these household appliances and the food associated with them were ultimately under the care of the lady of the manor, who thus found very much to do; though, owing to the large scale of provision here as compared with a poor man's house, her work was rather that of supervision than of actual labour. Her very name shows this, for lady is really derived from two words which mean loaf-kneader, thus pointing to what was in earliest times her most important duty; just as lord means loaf-ward or loaf guardian. Even *dairy* means originally the place where bread is made, and the dairymaid or deye,

as she was then called, was at first the servant who helped the lady in making the bread; though by this time it had been transferred to the servant who looked after the cows and milk and the making of articles of food from milk.

In these days, too, the age of marriage was low, for the expectation of life was much less then than

LADIES AT WORK

One is combing or carding wool, another is spinning with distaff and whorl, the third (the queen) is at the loom weaving.

it is now; girls were grown up at fourteen and might be married at fourteen or fifteen years of age, especially if they belonged to the upper classes of society. Once wedded, a girl had to undertake the very serious responsibilities associated with a gentleman's household. Her husband was often away from home for long periods at a time. He might be campaigning with the king, or at the court in attendance upon

him; or he might be a judge at Westminster or on circuit through the country; or business might call him away to one or other of his scattered estates. When he was away she was left to rule in his place. In the household there was a large staff of servants and retainers, for whose duties and behaviour she was ultimately responsible; the production of the food and drink required by all the members of the household required much supervision; there was also all that labour associated with food preservation of which we have already spoken. Then came the duties of spinning, weaving, embroidery, tapestry-making, and so on, all of which had to be attended to; the preparation of medicines, the overlooking of dairy work, and the care of gardens and pets. In addition, also, came frequent entertainment of visitors; for lords and ladies, bishops and clergy, perhaps the king himself, were often travelling about the country with large retinues of followers, and might stay at the house of a great noble for a night at least. Also in many cases it was customary for a noble to send a son or a daughter to be brought up by a neighbouring noble as a ward; Edward I., for example, as a boy was in the service of Simon de Montfort; and this meant added work and added responsibility.

We need not be surprised to hear that the wife of Lord Berkeley, in the early fourteenth century, never in the forty-two years of her married life was able to travel as much as ten miles from her home; and the Paston Letters tell us much the same story in the fifteenth century, not that travelling was very pleasant in days when roads were hopelessly bad,

and the only comfortable method was that of riding on horseback, though there were also litters and carriages of various kinds for those who could not do this. Women on horseback sat astride, for the side saddle, now tending to disappear, was not introduced till towards the end of the fourteenth century. But all the troubles of the journey—the bad roads,

TRAVELLING IN THE MIDDLE AGES. (Fourteenth Century)

the dirty inns, the fear of robbers, and all other perils by land and sea—did not prevent women from making the pilgrimages which were so popular a form of holiday-making in mediæval times.

These Paston Letters are an invaluable record of the life of a Norfolk family through several generations. The beginnings of their importance were laid by one of the family who served as a judge under Henry VI., and in succeeding generations there were lawyers, soldiers, and a great sailor. While these were

away from home the business of the house and estate was most efficiently transacted by the womenfolk; Margaret Paston especially, the wife of the judge, showed great capacity as housewife and mother; buying and selling, directing and governing servants, arranging leases, going to law, defending the estate by force if need be in the troublous times of the Wars of the Roses; watching over the education of the children; giving her daughters in marriage; and adding always to the value of the estate by her prudent and successful management. Such women also took a share in public affairs in various ways; we find them, for instance, sharing in the elections of the churchwardens, and also acting as churchwardens; and this at a time when the work of a churchwarden was very important indeed. Women of nobility, too, could act as Sheriff of the county, or Marshal or High Constable, all important and difficult offices.

But while married women thus found plenty of work to do and a position of importance in life, the private life of the average girl in a better-class family does not seem to have been a very happy one. There was little for such girls to do outside the home, and not always sufficient to occupy their time in it, and so they tended to become a nuisance to their parents. There was no education at this time for the children of the poor, except the severely practical one of sharing from an early age in the duties of the household; but children of the nobility and gentry could get some book-learning from the nunnery schools or from their father's household chaplain, and so could acquire skill in reading and writing, and practice

in accounts, at any rate. Spelling does not seem to have been cultivated, as the letters of the time show. But in education the boys were given a better chance than the girls, who for the most part had only marriage to look forward to as an escape from the hardships of the home. Girls and boys in these days were by no means well treated, they were expected to stand when in the presence of their parents, and they suffered much from severe and harsh treatment at their hands. Beating was the usual method of curing daughters of their faults. There is a poem of the fifteenth century which tells us *How the Good Wife taught her Daughter*, in which the teaching is directed mainly to the girl's future as a wife and mother. In it we are told that, if their children are disobedient, mothers should not nag and curse them, but rather take a good rod, and stand them in a row, and beat them till they cry for mercy and are convinced of their wrong-doing. One of the Paston Letters, dated June 29th, 1454, gives us some idea of the hard life of Elizabeth Paston, now twenty years of age, but still unmarried. "She was never in so great sorrow as she is nowadays, for she may not speak with no man, whosoever come, ne may not see nor speak with any man, nor with servants of her mother's, but that she beareth her on hand otherwise than she meaneth; and she hath since Easter the most part been beaten once in the week or twice, and sometimes twice in a day, and her head broken in two or three places."

Many girls were sent away from home to learn manners, and to be out of their parents' way. They might in this way enter the household of a noble or

country gentleman, as one of the handmaids of the lady of the house; or they might live with other people, probably relatives, and share in the ordinary work of the household, where the absence of daughters made this possible. But the usual method was marriage as soon as they grew up, and marriage brought with it greater freedom for them, though girls had very little to do with the choice of a husband. This was a matter which the parents usually decided for them, and questions of land and dowry often played a large part in the decision. The *Good Wife* advises her daughter never to despise any offer of marriage, but always to consult her friends about it before deciding, and also from the day of a daughter's birth to start collecting goods for her marriage when the time comes. Sometimes the parents' decision was supported by the children's love, as in the case of John Paston, who wished to marry Margery Brews. She also was anxious to have him for a husband, and in spite of many obstacles associated with the amount of her dowry, the two were at last united. We may spare room for one of her love-letters[1] (it will show how a lady wrote and spelled in the fifteenth century):

Unto my ryght welebelovyd Voluntyn, John Paston, Squyer, be this bill delyvered, &c.

Feb., 1477.

Ryght reverent and wurschypfull, and my ryght welebeloved Voluntyne. I recomande me unto yowe, ffull hertely desyring to here of yowr welefare whech I beseche almyghty God long for to preserve un to hys plesur, and yowr herts

[1] Fenn, *Original Letters of the XIVth and XVth Centuries.* Letter LXXII. Abbreviations in the letter have been expanded and stops supplied.

desyre. And yf it please yowe to here of my welefar, I am not in good heele of body, nor of herte, nor schall be tyll I her ffrom yowe;

> For there wottys no creature what peyn that I endure,
> And for to be deede, I dare it not dyscure.[1]

And my Lady my moder hath labored the mater to my ffadur full delygently but sche can no mor gete then ye knowe of, for the whech God knowyth I am full sory. But yf that ye loffe me, as I tryste verely that ye do, ye will not leffe me therefore, for if that ye hade not halfe the lyvelode that ye hafe, for to do the grettest labur that any woman on lyve myght, I wold not forsake yowe.

> And yf ye commande me to kepe me true wherever I go,
> I wyse I will do all my myght yowe to love and never no mo.
> And yf my freends say, that I do amys,
> Thei schal not me let so for to do,
> Myne herte me bydds ever more to love yowe
> Truly over all erthely thing,
> And yf thei be never so wroth,
> I tryst it schall be better in tyme commyng.

No more to yowe at this tyme, but the Holy Trinite hafe yowe in kepyng. And I besech yowe that this bill be not seyn of none erthely creatur safe only your selffe, &c.

And thys letter was indyte at Topcroft, with full hevy herte, &c.

By your own

MARGERY BREWS.

Margery Paston was not so fortunate, for she fell in love with, and betrothed herself to, the family bailiff and estate manager, a most capable man of affairs, but no fitting husband for her in the eyes of the family. In those days betrothal was considered as binding as marriage, and so she married him; but even so her brother writes in disgust that if everybody else consents, "he (the husband) should

[1] Discover.

never have my goodwill to make my sister to sell candles and mustard in Framlingham."

But there is plenty of evidence that marriages were usually very happy ones; though the wife was expected to order herself lowly and humbly before her husband. "Answer your husband meekly," advises the *Good Wife*, and if the story of patient Griselda as told by Chaucer is at all a representative case, women were indeed expected to be very patient and long-suffering and to endure very much at the hands of their husbands. But that this was not always so we can gather readily from Chaucer and from other sources, such as the Miracle Plays of the time. Chaucer's Wife of Bath was certainly capable of looking after herself; the Shepherd in the play of the Birth of Christ laments his marriage because of the shrewish nature of his wife; Noah's wife is such a scold that poor Noah bursts out:

> Lord, that woman be crabbed, aye!
> And never are meek, that I dare say.
> This is well seen of me to-day,
> In witness of you each one.
> Good wife, let be all this beere [noise]
> That thou makest in this place here.
> For they all ween, thou art master,
> And so thou art, by St. John.

This is when Noah is persuading her to leave her gossips and enter the Ark, and when she finally enters it, as a result of the combined entreaties of Noah and his children, she only does so after giving him a severe smack on the head. No wonder that the ducking-stool was a recognised punishment for scolds. But these, no doubt, are exceptional cases,

for the letters and stories of the time show plenty of examples of happy married life.

Women who did not wish to marry sometimes took the veil and entered a nunnery, where they spent their lives in devotion and study. Ladies of rank in the nunneries rose to positions of great importance as abbesses and prioresses, and must have found the work of controlling and directing such establish-

ENGLISH LADIES OF THE TIME OF HENRY III

ments no light task. Some of the nuns became teachers of the girls in the nunnery schools. Three famous abbesses of Anglo-Saxon times were Hilda of Whitby, the patroness of Cædmon; Etheldreda of Ely; and Ethelburga of Barking; and there were plenty of capable successors to them in these abbeys and elsewhere.

In the manor-houses the standard of comfort was steadily rising throughout the Middle Ages as wealth increased. This is shown by the increase in material comforts—better furniture, better houses, better

food and better dress. In dress, indeed, there is a very obvious tendency towards extravagance; Margaret Paston is not insensible to the advantages of a new scarlet gown; and attempts were made to check overdressing by means of Sumptuary Laws. Some of the material for dresses and so on came from France as part of the plunder gained in the wars there; Walsingham, an historian of the time, tells us of French garments, furs, pillows and household goods, tablecloths and necklaces, gold and silver cups, linen cloths and sheets, scattered throughout the houses of England. The Sumptuary Laws tried to restrict the cost of clothing according to the station of the wearer. The wives and daughters of grooms and servants were to wear no veils worth more than twelvepence each; the cloth of their gowns was not to exceed two marks in value; they were not to use any article of gold, silver, or silk. Chaucer's Wife of Bath, who belonged to the trading classes, had beautiful kerchiefs for her head, scarlet red hose, soft leather shoes, a fine wimple, a hat as broad as a shield, a large foot-mantle round her legs, and a pair of large spurs on her heels. The gentlewomen paid much attention to their dress.

ENGLISH LADIES OF THE TIME OF HENRY V

They liked costly materials, silks, velvets and fur for their flowing gowns, and no Sumptuary Laws could check this desire for fine clothing; it spread to all classes of society, and in it the poor strove to imitate the rich as much as possible, though custom ordained that each rank of society should be marked by its own distinctive type of dress and dress material.

In Saxon times women wore white linen tunics with ornamented borders, long and flowing at the bottom and girdled in at the waist.[1] Tight lacing is, at any rate, as old as Norman times. Over this was a short cloak fastened by a fibula or brooch. The Norman ladies increased the length and fulness of this gown, and used long loose sleeves, which trailed on the ground in the thirteenth century, and had to be tied up in knots at times to be out of the way. A century later sleeves were becoming tighter once more. In the thirteenth century dresses gain much in simplicity and grace, the material is finer, and drapes more successfully. The fourteenth century was especially a century of extravagance in dress; the reigns of Edward II. and Richard II. particularly so, as the satirical poems of these reigns show.

The usual head covering of an Anglo-Saxon lady was the head-rail (Saxon *hrægl*, a garment), a long strip of silk or linen which was wrapped round the head under the chin and round the neck, and was often held in place by a narrow circlet round the head.[1] This tied all the hair; for, while girls wore their hair long and loose, married women had short hair, or hair plaited and worn close to the head.

[1] Compare page 18.

Flowing locks meant freedom; short hair stood for servitude; the Saxon noble wore long hair and beard, the slave had his hair cut short.

The Norman kerchief for the head was much the same as the head-rail, but in the twelfth century

WOMEN'S HEAD-DRESSES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

ladies wore a white wimple, or band under the chin, and a coloured kerchief on top of the head. We may see the wimple surviving in the head-dress of the nun.

From the thirteenth century onward the hair was uncovered; elaborate head-dresses were popular, and their shape was continually changing. Sometimes they were heart-shaped, sometimes horn-shaped, sometimes they were made like a butterfly;

A LADY OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

finally, in the fifteenth century, they took the form of the steeple or sugar-loaf with a pretty drapery of silk or linen gauze upon it.

Shoes, too, varied in shape as time went on. At first they were clumsily made of hard, poorly-tanned leather, but later on were better shaped and of finer material, leather being imported from Cordova for this purpose. Coloured leathers, blue, green and red, were used, and pointed toes introduced in Norman times; by the reign of Richard II. these points had grown so long that they had to be fastened by a chain to the knees of the wearer in order to make walking possible. A reaction set in in the fifteenth century, and shoes became so broad-toed that they were called "duckbills."

Brooches, chains, and other ornaments were very much sought after by the rich; girdles especially afforded opportunity of display in this matter, and increased in magnificence as time went on. Hairnets of gold and silver thread were worn; rings, earrings, necklaces, bracelets and bangles were worn by men and women alike. Sometimes the rings were supposed to have value as charms.

There were plenty of amusements for the ladies of the manor-houses. They graced the tournaments with their presence; they shared with the men in the hawking and other forms of hunting, which the Normans had made the preserve of the rich. Many a lady kept her own hawks; the perches or long poles used by the lady for hanging up her clothing in her bedroom served also as a perch for her hawks and falcons; Dame Juliana Berners, the lady prioress of the nunnery of Sopwell, near St. Albans, in the fifteenth century, wrote in English verse a *Book of Hunting* and in prose a treatise on the *Art of Hawking*.

Indoors the children played hoodman-blind, our modern blind man's buff, or battledore and shuttlecock, or ninepins or whipping-top, or one or other of the various games of touch; while their mothers listened to minstrels or story-tellers, or watched the jugglers and tumblers, or played chess or dice, or, after the fourteenth century, cards.

It is obvious that in very many ways the standard of comfort was rising, though there were many things wanting which modern people would think absolutely necessary. Thus only the lady of the house and her children had a private bedroom, the servants and retainers using the large hall; and while there were

bedclothes in plenty and feather-beds are common in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, nightdresses were not in use before the sixteenth century.

LADIES PLAYING CARDS

[The original is probably the oldest representation extant; it dates from the fifteenth century]

One interesting proof of the rising standard of comfort is the attention paid in the fifteenth century to good manners and behaviour. Books giving advice on these matters began to be written, and copies of some of them remain. A selection of the maxims they contain will enable readers to see what progress had been made by this time, and to compare it with conditions nowadays. Here is some more of the advice the *Good Wife* gave to her daughter: "Don't let the rain stop you from going to church. Don't be a romp. Don't toss your head and wriggle your shoulders when you walk. When good ale is plentiful, be moderate; if you are often drunk you will be disgraced." Other books are especially concerned with behaviour at meal-times: "Stand till you are told to sit. Don't pick your nose, teeth, or nails, or stuff your mouth so full you can't speak. Don't dip your meat in the salt-cellar, or put your knife into your mouth. Don't pick your teeth with your knife. (We must remember that fingers served as forks in these days.) Don't throw the bones on the floor.

Take salt with a clean knife. Don't scratch yourself in public. Set never on fish, flesh or fowl more than two fingers and a thumb." These selections are sufficient to show that we have made considerable progress since then.

CHAPTER IV

WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN THE TOWNS

PROGRESS in the modern sense of the term has but little place in the story of English life during the Middle Ages. Matters tend rather to remain stationary, changes are slow to come. But in the towns changes came at a quicker rate than in the country, and we have greater differences here. Where a large number of people are living together things can be produced on a larger scale, and it may well be that this will result in certain materials being produced out of the house in the towns, while in the country they are still being produced at home. This is quite true even at the present day. Where there is increased production division of labour, too, may be set up, so that people who are specially skilled in certain directions will spend their time always at the work for which they are best fitted. This, in fact, had already begun to happen in the country districts, where the clever carpenters and ironsmiths stayed in the village and mended broken agricultural tools and made new ones, while their fellow-men did their work for them in the fields, so as to ensure them food in return for their labour; for in these days there was much co-operation between the workers, and these men were not paid by the actual work they did, but by work on their lands. If this was beginning to be true of the country districts, it was

still more likely to be true of the towns, with their larger population, and the coming and going of traders and other visitors. Trade in salt and iron,

A SURVIVAL OF A MEDIÆVAL STREET

two things which could not possibly be done without, started at an early date, and among the first traders were those who brought these things from the places where they were produced to the towns and villages.

Such persons as these had to be catered for in the matter of food and lodging, and so public baking and brewing start, and we have the establishment of eating-houses and public resting-places. Also the natives of the town soon find that if they buy their bread and beer and other foodstuffs, they will have more time for the work in which they are engaged, and from which they are getting better profits, and so service industries begin to develop. It is an example of specialising in industry, with increasing division of labour; and very soon men cease to build their own houses or make their own furniture, or tan their own leather, or weave their own cloth, and the trades which correspond to these industrial processes are called into being.

With specialisation of industry, too, there came an increased production, and soon more goods were being made than the locality required. The surplus products were sold in the fairs and markets which were now springing up in different parts of England. Hence industries continued to increase in number and importance in the towns; some of them services which benefited fellow-townsmen and visitors, others, and especially the making of the woollen cloths for which England was quickly famous, with a view to sale at markets and fairs. But there were no factories, nor were these goods produced under modern conditions of factory and workshop life. The spinning and weaving of wool was carried on in the homes of the workers; and each house had a shop which was rather a workroom than a saleroom.

Industries in these days were in the hands of craftsmen working at home, and these craftsmen

were collected together for the protection of their industrial rights and privileges into craft gilds, which controlled the various industries. The earliest craft gild of which we have knowledge is the London Gild of Weavers, which was established in the twelfth century; and soon each important industry had its gild. The gild controlled the conditions of work in the industry, settled the hours of labour and the number of apprentices a man could have, saw to it that the material used was good, and fixed the price at which the finished article should be sold. In other ways, too, it looked after the interests of its members, taking care of them in times of sickness or other misfortunes, or helping them in the recovery of their debts.

The women of the household shared in all this work in addition to the cares of the household. At this time, we must again bear in mind, the work of the house was not so clearly cut off from the work of the shop; both went on side by side, and men and boys, both sons and apprentices, shared in the household work with the women and girls. Much of the detailed work of the house was, in fact, left to the girls, and the housewife was left free to work with her husband in the production of goods for sale; just the opposite to the position nowadays, when the housewife stays at home and does all the household tasks while the daughters are out at work. The most important occupation of women and girls was carding or cleaning wool, and spinning it into yarn; for the production of woollen cloths was by far the most important industry in England until the middle of the eighteenth century. Weaving the

yarn was more often a man's occupation, though we find that in York in the fourteenth century one-quarter of the cloth produced was woven by women.

Linen and silk goods were made as well as woollen cloths; and women worked also at such branches of the industry as dyeing and fulling, or cleaning the woollens after they had been woven. Silk-weaving especially was a woman's industry; and when competition begins to come from Lombardy and elsewhere in the shape of imported silk goods, there are petitions to King and Commons for protection, sent in "by the poor women called silkwomen." An Act of Parliament of 1455 forbade the importation of these manufactured silk goods, so that this particular women's industry, which the petition declared was the occupation of many gentlewomen and others in great number, might continue, and idleness among young gentlewomen might be stopped. London was a very important centre of this work.

Women engaged also in many other industries. They were knitters and candlemakers; in the districts where lead and iron ores were smelted, they did many kinds of work—breaking up the ore into smaller pieces, washing it free from dirt, or blowing the bellows of the furnace; usually, as is so often the case in these joint occupations, at a low rate of wages. So also we hear of women sharing in coal-mining operations and acting as workers in stone quarries, where they are engaged in the thirteenth century in carrying the stones out of the quarries in baskets on their backs.

All this was not done without friction in the gilds concerned. So far as membership was concerned,

the gilds rarely made any difference between husband and wife, and the sisters (the wives) shared in all the social and religious life of the gild, equally with the brethren; wearing their livery, hoods, and gowns as well as the men, and being no doubt even prouder of them than the men were. If the husband died, the wife continued in the gild while she carried on the trade. Apprentices were bound to her; in some cases should she marry again to a man not free of the gild her marriage gave to him the freedom of the gild. Most of the women engaged in business on their own account would seem to have been widows or daughters of deceased freemen, carrying on the business their husbands or fathers had formerly carried on. The gild, too, might also be willing to provide a marriage dowry from its chest for a gildsman's daughter, if her father were too poor to provide it.

In all these cases, however, one has to realise that one is dealing with the members of the gildsman's household. It is different when the gild has to consider the work of other women in its craft. Thus we find a tendency on the part of weavers' gilds to restrict the number of looms per weaver to two, allowing one of these to be worked by son, wife or daughter, but forbidding the weaver to hire anyone outside his own house to work it, as this would unduly increase the number of the workers. So also girls were not apprenticed to men's industries. Similarly, on other occasions efforts are made by the gilds to prevent women other than wives and daughters from sharing in men's occupations. Women were forbidden to weave worsteds on the ground that they were not strong enough to weave

them properly; the Lincoln fullers objected to women, other than wives or handmaids, working with the craftsmen; the same objection was raised by the London brace-makers and the Bristol weavers. Sometimes the argument against women's work is that if women do the work men will be thrown out of employment, and so the king's service will be weakened. But these restrictions are also intended to keep up the prices of the articles made by controlling the number of workers entering the gild, and the price paid for their labour; both of these could best be done where men were employed, as men served an apprenticeship first and entered on this through the gild, and rates of pay for their work could be fixed and enforced by the gild.

Whoever may have gained by these restrictions, it is evident that the wives and daughters of the craftsmen did not, for the restriction made their work the only work of a casual kind which the craftsmen could obtain; and, as in this form it was also very cheap and uncontrolled by any outside authority, there is little doubt that many girls were worked very hard at various crafts, without the advantages their brothers obtained in the way of the systematic training given to the boys because they had been duly apprenticed. The result was, naturally, that women and girls occupied an inferior position in all matters of trade and industry, and were often engaged in occupations for which they were little fitted.

There were, however, cases where girls were duly apprenticed. Miss Dunlop tells us that there is a record of this as early as 1389, and that the apprenticeship of girls is common in the London records of

the early fifteenth century. She adds that "even girls of well-to-do families were often bound apprentice, not so much it appears in order to learn a trade as for the sake of the general education and discipline which apprenticeship afforded."[1] They did not necessarily learn their master's craft, but that of his wife if he had one, together with housework and housekeeping.

Before the days of the craft gilds, when the community was engaged rather in selling materials than in making them, there had been merchant gilds in the country. These were associations of traders in the articles produced in England or imported from elsewhere. Women had been members of these gilds also—in fact, at all times during the Middle Ages we find women engaged in various trades; often pursuing them separately from their husbands' occupations, taking their own apprentices, holding their own property, and responsible for their own debts as independent traders.

In this way women did much of the work of the community, often as independent workers, as a collection of the names ending in the feminine suffix *ster*, which denotes occupation, will show. Spinster bears testimony to the fact that almost all unmarried women did some spinning, at any rate; a webster was a woman weaver; brewster and maltster show that brewing was a woman's occupation; baxter shows that many women were engaged in baking as an industry; litster and lyster tell us that women shared in the dyeing of cloths.[2] In fact, the Statute

[1] J. A. Dunlop. *Apprenticeship and Child Labour.*

[2] Compare also the words huckster, kempster, seamstress, and sempstress.

of Artificers of 1364, which attempted to regulate the industries and wages of the country, while forbidding any man to engage in more than one craft, permitted women to act as brewsters, bakers, carders, spinners, or on work in wool, linen or silk, as they pleased.

Women, too, as we have said, engaged in many forms of trading; certain forms of hawking especially were in their hands, such as the sale of bread and fish; we have all heard of English fishwives. Baking was in fact a recognised woman's trade, and the production of bread was regulated carefully by the authorities and its price fixed by means of Assizes of Bread; an assize meaning either a sitting of a special court, or the decisions arrived at by the court. The price of the loaf in these days remained fixed, but its weight was made to vary with the price of corn. People who did not keep their bread up to the proper quality, or who gave short weight, could be punished by the town authorities. Langland tells us that

Women that bake and brew · butchers and cooks,
They are the people · that harm the poor,
They harm the poor · who can but buy pennyworths,
And secretly and oft · they poison them,
They grow rich on their retailing · with what the poor should eat,
They buy houses · they become landlords,
If they sold honestly · they would not build so high,
Nor buy their tenures.

There were similar Assizes of Weights and Measures, and Assizes of Ale; the Assize of Bread and Ale being a very customary one. The ale-houses were generally kept by women, each of whom brewed

her own particular brand of ale; at the beginning of the fourteenth century there were more than 1300 brewers in London alone, and here again the price was fixed according to the price of barley, and provision made to ensure that good ale was brewed and fair measure given. The ale-house

THE WICKED ALE-WIFE'S PUNISHMENT

[*From a misericord in Ludlow Church*]

The scroll of her offences is a long one. She still retains her quart pot. The whale's mouth on the right typifies the entrance to hell.

keepers were in the habit of producing ale of inferior quality, or of inserting in their brew salt and other provocatives to thirst. A common punishment for the ale-wife who offended was to compel her publicly to drink as much of her inferior brew as possible, and then to pour the rest of it over her, or she might be forced to endure the ducking-stool.

There is plenty of evidence that many of the ale-house keepers took advantage of their occupation

to the detriment of the community; and that some of the ale-houses were dens of iniquity. Thus in the Chester Plays the part representing the Harrowing of Hell is undertaken by the cooks, tapsters, hostlers and innkeepers (quite a significant fact in itself, we may suppose), and an ale-wife who had gone below is made to speak as follows:

> Sometime I was a taverner,
> A gentle gossip and a tapster,
> Of wine and ale a trusty brewer,
> Which woe hath me wrought.
> Of cans I kept no true measure,
> My cups I sold at my pleasure,
> Deceiving many a creature,
> Though my ale were naught.
> Therefore this place ordained is
> For such ill-doers so much amiss.
> Here shall they have their joy and bliss.

The author of *Piers Plowman*, as we should expect, gives us pictures of ale-house life. Here is one of them:

> Now beginneth the Glutton · for to go to confession,
> And carries himself churchward · his confession to make.
> Then Betty the Brewster · bade him good morrow,
> And then she asked of him · whither that he wended?
> "To holy church," quoth he · "for to hear mass
> And then I shall be shriven · and sin no more."
> "I have good ale, gossip," quoth she · "Glutton, wilt thou try it?"
> "Hast thou aught in thy purse?" quoth he · "any hot spices?"
> "Yea, Glutton, gossip," quoth she · "God wot, full good.
> I have pepper and peony seeds · and a pound of garlic,
> A farthing's worth of fennel seed · for these days of fasting."

Glutton is easily persuaded to go in, and greets the assembled company. Here are some of them:

Ciss the cobbler's wife · sat on the bench.
Wat the gamekeeper · and his wife both.
Tomkin the tinker · and two of his prentices.
Hick the hackney man · and Hogg the needle-seller,
Clarice of Cook's lane · and the Clerk of the church,
Sir Pers of Pridye · and Pernel of Flanders,
Daw the ditcher · and a dozen others.

After sampling the ale, Clement the Cobbler offers to sell his cloak and Hick the Hostler his hood, and there is much exciting bargaining and swearing, till Robin the Roper is made umpire, and decides that Hick shall have the cloak and Clement the hood on condition that he fills the cup again. When this was settled

There was laughing and chaffing · and "let go the cup,"
Bargains and beverages · began to arise.
And they sat so till evensong · and sung between whiles,
Till Glutton had gulped down · a gallon and a gill.

At the finish Glutton could scarcely stand and walked all ways like a gleeman's dog or a man setting lines for bird-catching, and Clement had to help him home, and he was very ill on the way.

Then with all the woe of the world · his wife and his wench
Bore him home to his bed · and brought him within,
And after all this surfeit · a sleeping fit he had
That he slept Saturday and Sunday · till the sun went to rest.

It is a vivid picture of mediæval life, and many alehouses were even worse than this of Betty's, for they were pawnshops, or the haunts of thieves and robbers, and the women who kept them the receivers of stolen property. Women too, as we see, resorted to them as well as men, with evil results.

The developments of the towns and their industries and trade resulted in the growth of a new class of

people. The richer craftsmen and the merchants and their families developed into a new middle class between the gentry on the one hand and the labourers on the other, most of them rising from the lower class into the new one thus formed. Their wealth made them a very important section of the community; their wives were proud of the dignity they attained, their daughters sometimes married into the ranks of the gentry, who welcomed an alliance which brought money with it. John Paston was not averse from marrying the daughter of a rich London draper. Many of the younger sons of the country gentry, too, came into the big towns as apprentices to the merchants, and became traders themselves, possibly laying the foundations of their fortunes by marrying the widow or the daughter of their master. Sir Richard Whittington started in this manner; it was after this fashion that Edward Osborne in the sixteenth century started the ducal house of Leeds, aided, as he was, by a fortunate dive from London Bridge which rescued his master's daughter from drowning.

BEDS IN THE TFIFTEENH CENTURY
Note the truckle-bed which pushes under the larger one when not in use.

In these houses, at any rate, there was a steady rise in the standard of comfort, with a corresponding refinement of manners and morals. Bedrooms increased in number and in comfortable fittings for the bed; carpets began to take the place of rushes,

some floors were tiled after the Dutch fashion. Sideboards and cupboards came into use to hold the new earthenware and glass and pewter or even silver plate. Merchants could vie with the nobility, and could entertain kings and queens in their houses. Not so, of course, the poor, crowded away in narrow and dirty unpaved streets and alleys in miserable houses with but little comfort in them, and often short of food and of the other necessities of life.

PART II

THE PERIOD OF DOMESTIC INDUSTRY

CHAPTER V

THE RENAISSANCE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

DURING the fifteenth century changes were taking place in the way in which people looked out upon the world, and in the way in which they thought about the world and all that it was supposed to mean to them. It was in Italy especially that the change in outlook commenced. The Italians had never forgotten the greatness of their country in the days of the Roman Empire, and were very proud of that empire. They looked with wonder and admiration upon the ruins of buildings around them which had been the work of their ancestors; they read with interest the books which had been written by some of those ancestors. Only in the dark days that followed the downfall of that mighty empire the folk had forgotten to some extent what the empire was like and what it had stood for. Now they were beginning to realise that past once more, and were getting from the books a truer idea of the meaning of the old Roman power. They were also studying the work of the old Greek writers, which had been

for a time almost forgotten; and in the fifteenth century many Greek scholars came from Constantinople and the cities of the Eastern Empire in order to escape from the Turks, who had crossed from Asia Minor into Europe and were making themselves masters of the Balkan Peninsula. In 1453 the Turks captured Constantinople itself after a desperate siege, and more Greek scholars came to Italy, bringing with them stores of manuscripts and stores of learning, which they used as teachers in the Italian cities.

All this helped on the change which was coming over Western Europe. This change we generally speak of as the Renaissance, because it was a new birth or revival of much that had gone before; and a truer and fuller appreciation of the meaning and purpose of the old life of the Greeks and Romans, and of their methods of government, their literature, and so on. Now this Renaissance brought with it many changes to the people of England. Its influence on their thoughts and their lives was very great indeed, and of necessity it also had a great influence on the life and work of English women and girls. Let us try to see what some of the changes were. In the first place it laid greater stress upon the importance of the individual man and woman than the Middle Ages had done. As we have seen already, in the Middle Ages people were banded together into corporations or classes or gilds, or whatever the company was called; and they gave up their own individuality in many ways in following out the desires and purposes of the class to which they belonged. With the Renaissance, they began to look

upon themselves more as separate units, separate human beings with desires and intentions and purposes and thoughts of their own; and this led on among the Teutonic peoples of Northern Europe to a change in their religious outlook, and to a great Reformation in the Church.

At the same time the study of the old Greek and Roman writings caused many people to place a much higher value upon education than they had ever done before, and so developments took place in education, especially among the people in the upper ranks of society. The young ladies of these households were now given greater opportunities of learning, with the result that the sixteenth century is remarkable for a number of gifted women who are notable either as rulers or as scholars. They include Margaret Beaufort, the clever mother of Henry VII., who founded or helped to found St. John's and Christ's Colleges at Cambridge; Mary I. and Elizabeth, who were queens of England; and Mary, Queen of Scots. Amongst the scholars were the unfortunate Lady Jane Grey, of whom her teacher, Ascham, wrote when he visited her at her father's house in Leicestershire: "Her parents, with all the household gentlemen and gentlewomen, were hunting in the park. I found her in her chamber alone reading Plato's *Phædo* in Greek, and that with as much delight as some gentlemen would read a merry tale"; Margaret Roper, the favourite daughter of Sir Thomas More; the mother of Lord Falkland; and the three daughters of Anthony Cooke, of whom Anne was the mother of Francis, Lord Bacon, and herself a scholar and translator.

The Renaissance also brought with it new ideas as to the earth, and led the way to many wonderful geographical discoveries. Vasco da Gama sailed round the Cape of Good Hope, 1498, and reached India; Columbus journeyed across the Atlantic to discover a New World in 1492; Magellan's ship sailed all round the globe in 1520–22. Thus new lands were discovered, and new lands brought increased opportunities for trade and commerce. But these new markets were very different from the markets and fairs to which the goods of the mediæval craftsmen went. They were far distant from home, especially in these days of slowly-moving sailing ships, and the man or woman who put money into these ventures would have to wait some time before getting any return for the money invested. Moreover, the risks were very much greater now. As Shylock says of the Venetian trade: "Ships are but boards, sailors but men; there be land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves, I mean pirates; and then there is the peril of waters, winds and rocks."

The result of all this was that money capital became more important in industry than it had formerly been. The mediæval craftsman and his wife had been workers and producers on a small scale and for well-known and safe markets. Much that they had made went to well-known customers; the excess was easily absorbed in the neighbouring markets and fairs. Bad debts were infrequent, and the gild had a means of recovering such debts for its members. Consequently, money capital had not been so important in the days of the craft gild as

had been good workmanship, good material, and a good connection.

Now that money capital was become of greater importance, the craftsman began to disappear and a new system of industry came into being. The chief manufacture was still the making of woollen cloths, and it was still carried on for the most part in the homes of the people. But the people generally had little or no money for investment in the industry, and it passed under the control of men with money, who are known as clothiers. These men bought up large supplies of wool in the markets and fairs, either directly from the farmers themselves or through a wool-broker, and carried it round the villages on pack-horses, leaving it at the cottages of the people to be spun into yarn and woven into cloth. The yarn or cloth, as the case might be, was then collected and carried away, the yarn for weaving, the cloth to be finished by the fullers and shearmen, and then exported and sold. We shall describe this system in the next chapter. Many of these clothiers came from the ranks of the weavers themselves; and they and their families form one branch of that new middle class which was already making progress even during the Middle Ages. From the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries they increase in number and importance in both town and country. This trading period which is now commencing in the sixteenth century is the great age of the merchants; the age of the manufacturers has not yet come, we shall have to wait to the end of the eighteenth century for that.

The increase in wealth was accompanied by another

rise in the standard of comfort for these well-to-do people. The old country manor-house became a splendid country residence, with many private living rooms and bedrooms, and privacy in life became the order of the day. Of course there were not wanting those who decried the change, and praised "the good old days." Thus William Harrison, a clergyman of the days of good Queen Bess, and an ardent lover of his country, wrote: "And yet see the change, for when our houses were builded of willow, then had we oken men; but now that our houses are come to be made of oke, our men are become willow. . . . Now have we many chimnies; and yet our tenderlings complain of rheumes, catarhs, and poses [colds in the head]. Then had we none but reredosses [open hearths], and our heads did never ake. For as the smoke in those days was supposed to be a sufficient hardning for the timber of the house, so it was reputed a far better medicine to keepe the goodman and his familie from the quacke or pose, wherewith, as then, very few were oft acquainted."

Glass was becoming more plentiful, and houses were now built with plenty of windows, so much so that Bacon complains that it is hard to find a place in which to sit out of the sun. Furniture, too, was improving both in kind and in manufacture. Bedrooms were now becoming usual, and were often beautifully furnished; to know something of an Elizabethan lady's bedroom it is only necessary to read the description of Imogen's room which Shakespeare has given us in *Cymbeline*. Dressers and cupboards had been introduced for

the display of the Venetian glass, china, and silver and pewter plate which were becoming customary in the houses of the well-to-do. No period of British history can show finer woodwork, chiefly in oak, than the Jacobean period; though the work of the later portion of the eighteenth century, when mahogany became the rage, and Chippendale and Sheraton were famous furniture designers, is at least equally good. Tapestries and wall hangings, too, were now replaced by wall-papers, and rushes by carpets.

Right on to the time of the Restoration the country lady continued the supervision of household affairs, as she had done during the Middle Ages; and the increase of comforts necessarily increased the work of the household. But servants were now employed in larger numbers than ever, and very much of the actual work was delegated to them. There was, however, still plenty for the lady of the house to do; the Puritan matrons of the first half of the seventeenth century are among the noblest types of Englishwomen of all ages. Both Royalist and Puritan ladies gave good accounts of themselves during the Civil War, defending themselves and their property vigorously and cleverly; and this type persisted right on through the eighteenth century in all parts of the country. When they were not busy with the cares of the household they could find employment in the still-room, where, with the still-room maid, they prepared various kinds of essences, scents, and dressings from the herbs and flowers of their gardens. As these cares and duties became lighter, many of these country ladies gave much time to

works of charity, and made the care of the poor part of the business of their lives. The eighteenth century contains the names of women who are famous in our history for their philanthropy; Elizabeth Fry did much to obtain improvements in prisons, hospitals and asylums. Here is a pretty picture of an eighteenth-century country lady: "By the side of this good lady jingled a bunch of keys, securing in different closets and corner cupboards all sorts of cordial waters, cherry and raspberry brandy, washes for the complexion, Daffy's elixir, a rich seed-cake, a number of pots of currant jelly and raspberry jam, a range of gallipots and phials containing salves, electuaries, juleps, and purges for the use of the poor neighbours. The daily business of this good lady was to scold the maids, collect eggs, feed the turkeys, and assist at all lyings-in that happened within the parish."

Unfortunately, what with the increase of wealth and the great change that came over English society with the return of Charles II. from the Continent at the Restoration, the cutlook of the housewife changed. In many cases instead of sharing in the cares and responsibilities of the household, and in the affairs of business, the women of the upper classes began now to lead a life of leisure, which was often a very aimless one. For many women marriage became the sole preoccupation, and the preparation was rather in the direction of accomplishments which would please a man than those which were really helpful to the life of both. The education which girls received suffered in consequence. Deportment—the proper carriage of the body, aided by the

use of backboards and other instruments of torture—dancing and music became all-important. You will remember that when the Dorrits became rich, the girls had to learn to be gentlewomen; and the way of learning how to hold the lips properly was to say over and over again: "Prunes and prisms." Young ladies with much leisure on their hands spent their time in working samplers and embroidery, or in sewing and knitting; housework in too many cases became something beneath them; while, as vigorous sports were something in which no lady shared, their health deteriorated, and fainting fits became somewhat common.

Dr. Johnson gives us an amusing picture of the misapplied energy of young ladies of good family in the *Idler* for 1758. The father of the household is writing of the upbringing of his daughters by their mother, who objected to their being idle, with the result that she gave them needlework to do before breakfast, and made them do it in the garret, where the absence of windows other than the skylight prevented them from wasting their time in looking about. A new task occupied them till dinner, with the mother supervising their work if possible. The result was that in this household there were three flourished quilts to every bed, twice as many fire-screens as chimneys, half the rooms adorned with a kind of subtile pictures to imitate tapestry, and boxes full of knitted garters and braided shoes, embroidered covers for side saddles, and curtains never hung up. Meanwhile the girls grew up in total ignorance of everything, past, present, and future. Molly wondered whether Ireland was in

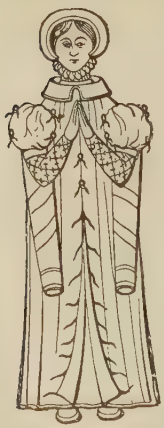
France, and Dolly could not read a chapter in the Bible, because she had spent all her time in working in tapestry the interview between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.

WOMEN PLAYING DICE. (Sixteenth century)

Women of the upper middle class were continually marrying into the ranks of the nobility. Defoe, in his *Complete English Tradesman* (1741), devotes a whole chapter to a list of illustrious families of our English nobility, some of which owed their rise to trade and others their fortunes to provident alliances with the families of citizens. At the same time, he points out that ladies in his day, ladies of good family though of mean fortune, were so stiff on the point of honour as to refuse to marry merchants vastly above them in wealth and fortune.

With wealth came changes in the mode of life, for after a time wealth bred luxury and extravagance and idleness. Harrison tells us that in Elizabethan days the older ladies of the court avoided idleness by needlework, or reading the Scriptures or history, or by writing and translation, while the young ones enjoyed various kinds of instrumental and vocal music. The older ones, too, were skilled in surgery and distillation of waters, and could cook with the

best. This was not always true of the ladies of the Restoration and after, for many of them looked down upon such occupations and thought them menial; dancing, and later gambling of various kinds, became popular; towards the end of the eighteenth century women played often for very high stakes, and the women of the middle classes aped them in this and in many other ways.



BRASS SHOWING COSTUME OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Food of all kinds was plentiful, and was well served on gold, silver or pewter dishes. Venetian glass was much used. Wines of various kinds were common; tea was coming into use in 1660, though at first the best qualities were as much as sixty shillings a pound; coffee was a very favourite drink, and in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries coffee-houses, frequented by the gentry and others, were common in the large towns. Pepys' Diary shows that the love of eating continued throughout the seventeenth century; it was equally common in the eighteenth, when wine-drinking too was a vice of the upper classes. The discovery of the New World was followed by the introduction of new foods, such as chocolate, which quickly became popular, tapioca, maize, and the potato. Tobacco, too, was introduced from there in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The hour of dinner crept on to eleven, and in the time of Steele had got to three, though he had doubts whether it would remain there.

As household comforts increased in all directions, dress and fashions became all-important; the Tudors loved show and pageant; Elizabeth is said to have possessed some 3000 dresses herself. The Elizabethan ladies wore bodices with long V-shaped fronts, and skirts stretched over big hoop-like frames of wire, called farthingales; all richly trimmed with gold thread, beads, pearls, and even precious

COSTUMES OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

stones. One of the most characteristic features of Elizabethan dress was the ruff, which started as a small collar frill, but soon assumed considerable dimensions. It was replaced in Charles I.'s reign by pretty collars and cuffs of point lace. Head-dresses of various kinds were worn, and the hair was heaped upon the top of the head and dyed to suit the colour of the gown. The Puritan ladies reacted against this extravagance, but with the Restoration extravagant fashions once more reigned supreme, and in the next century came enormous hooped dresses in beautiful flowered silks and lace embroideries, which were

soon followed by towering head-dresses of hair padded with various substances until they stood two or three feet high, with greasy pomades and powder over all. How they managed to get into coaches, and especially into the popular Sedan-chairs, with these monstrous hoops and head-dresses is a matter of wonder. By the end of the seventeenth century ladies were powdering and painting their faces, and wore patches also on their faces to improve their appearance. By the position of the patch it was possible to decide which political party the lady favoured. Wigs, too, were worn by ladies in the eighteenth century.

COSTUMES OF THE MIDDLE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

In these and in all ways it is obvious that the life of the average lady was fast becoming a decidedly artificial one. Artificiality and convention ruled everything, and women in this rank of society were becoming almost useless members of society so far as their economic value was concerned. In the country, however, difficulties of travel owing to the bad roads everywhere, left the womenfolk largely isolated from the towns; and this was in some respects a gain to them, for it kept them free from

the vices of the Restoration court and society. Unfortunately, however, the country lacked facilities for girls' education, and so the girls grew up with very little learning; while their fathers and husbands were too often ignorant, hard-drinking, fox-hunting squires. Luckily, in the eighteenth century the fashionable spas like Bath, Epsom, and Tunbridge Wells became popular resorts for all the well-to-do, and the country ladies who migrated there annually came into contact with their sisters of the town. While this was not without its dangers—there was much in town life that was artificial and immoral—it did at the time break down the isolation and ignorance of the country gentry and aided in the spread of learning.

For by the end of the eighteenth century there were many who believed in women's education. Two centuries earlier the enlightened Sir Thomas More had lured his daughters to learning with kindly encouragement, so that he could write to them:

> Kisses enough have I given you, forsooth, but stripes hardly ever,
> If I have whipped you at all, it has been with a peacock's feather.

Now some girls were receiving a good and sensible education, even though it was thought to stand in the way of a good marriage; and Lord Chesterfield could write of a lady, "she understands Latin perfectly well, though she wisely conceals it." The daughters of the nobility and the richer classes got education at home; the opportunities of the daughters of middle-class parents were much more restricted. The rules framed for Harrow School in 1590 expressly forbid the teaching of girls in the school; and even

where girls are admitted it is often on condition that they leave early. The second half of the century was the era of the *blue stockings*, a term applied satirically to ladies of literary ability who met and discussed matters of intellectual importance, and of whom the most celebrated was Mrs. Montagu. The spread of the newspaper and printed magazine and book was giving wider opportunities of culture all the time, and the eighteenth century contains the names of a number of women who are of importance in the story of English literature.

CHAPTER VI

COUNTRY LIFE FROM THE SIXTEENTH TO THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THE last days of gild control were very different from the first. As happens so often in history, what had been very useful at the beginning was now becoming outworn and out of date. The system had deteriorated. In the earliest days most, if not all, of the gild members were very much on an equality. Money was the least important requirement in the industry; skill and good-will counted for much more than money did. But as time went on distinctions arose which were based very largely on wealth. Some members became richer than others; and these richer members began almost at once to try to get control of the government of the gild, so as to rule it in their own interests. They made the wearing of expensive liveries necessary if one held office in the gild; they fixed the hours of meetings at times when members who had to work all day at their craft could not spare time to attend; they raised the fees of admittance to the gild, and they demanded a very expensive and intricate masterpiece as a condition of entrance, so that it was very difficult for the poorer apprentices to become full members. Consequently there grew up a section of members in many of the industries who had little or no chance of ever becoming masters with businesses of their own—men who were condemned to

be always journeymen or day-workers. Most young persons expected after apprenticeship to be journeymen or journeywomen for a short time; but in the earlier days of industry under the gilds they could hope finally to become masters or mistresses for themselves.

Owing to the restrictions under which these persons were placed in the corporate towns, where the gilds were powerful, they now began to leave those towns and to settle in the villages which were not under gild jurisdiction; and, as we have already suggested, a new system of industry sprang up in the villages from the fifteenth century onward. These journeymen and others had only their skill to offer, perhaps they had not even a loom on which to work. But there were plenty of clothiers with money which they were anxious to invest in cloth-making, and with this money they could buy wool or woollen yarn, which they could hand out to spinners and weavers; and also looms which they could let the weavers hire from them. This they did, and soon in many parts of England, both in the Eastern Counties and in the West of England where the woollen trade had been very important all through the Middle Ages, and also on the slopes of the Pennines in Lancashire and Yorkshire, this new system of industry was in full swing. Ultimately it was to be the North of England (and especially the West Riding of Yorkshire) that was to become the chief seat of the woollen industry, by far the most important of the textile industries at this time. The cotton industry was not as yet of very considerable magnitude, and the linen industry developed in the north-east

of Ulster and in the Clyde region in Scotland rather than in England. One important development in this region was the manufacture of sewing thread, which was started in Renfrewshire towards the end of the seventeenth century by a woman named Christian Shaw, herself a skilful flax spinner. She derived her knowledge of this industry from Holland, and her thread was much used for the making of lace.

In the woollen industry the clothier sometimes collected his workers in his own house, and so possessed what at a later date we should call a factory, but there were not many of these. A writer of Tudor times named Deloney, who wrote popular ballads and tales which must have pleased the working people very much, has left a long account of the life of a certain John of Winchcombe, or Jack of Newbury as he was called, who is said to have kept five hundred people at work in Newbury in the cloth trade, and especially in making kerseys, a coarse ribbed woollen cloth. According to Deloney, this clothier entertained Henry VIII. at his house on one occasion. Here is part of the poet's description of the works, though I cannot say whether it is an exact and accurate statement, for Deloney was not incapable of much romancing in telling a tale:

> Within one roome being large and long,
> There stood two hundred Loomes full strong;
> Two hundred men the truth is so,
> Wrought in these Loomes all in a row.
> By every one a pretty boy
> Sate making quils [1] with mickle joy;

[1] Pieces of reed or cane on which the threads were wound; as it was light work, this was done by girls and boys.

And in another place hard by,
An hundred women merily,
Were carding hard with joyfull cheere,
Who singing sate with voices cleere,
And in a chamber close beside,
Two hundred maidens did abide
In petticoates of Stammell[1] red,
And milke-white kerchers on their head;
Their smocke-sleeves like to winter snow,
That on the Westerne mountaines flow,
And each sleeve with a silken band,
Was featly tied at the hand,
These pretty maids did never lin[2]
But in that place all day did spin;
And spinning so with voices meet
Like Nightingals they sung full sweet.
Then to another room came they
Where children were in poore array;
And every one sate picking wool,
Had every one a penny at night,
Beside their meat and drink all day,
Which was to them a wondrous stay.

. . . . .

This was a gallant clothier sure
Whose fame for ever shall endure.

But the greater part of the work at this time was done either in one of the rooms of the worker's house, or in a shed attached to the house, and that is why we usually speak of this new system as the *Domestic System of Industry*. Notice carefully how it differs from the craft system which came before it. In the craft system the craftsman provided the material, made it up into the finished article, and then took it to market himself. In the domestic system the clothier found the material and marketed the finished article; the workers were concerned

[1] A coarse red cloth. [2] Cease, stop.

only in the making of the article, and in the wage they received for the work they did. It would be easy to mention many occupations which are even now at this stage of industrial development: tailoring and dressmaking, boxmaking, knitting, and so on.

In the making of woollens it was the carding and spinning which took up most of the time. Both these processes were very slow ones compared with weaving, and one weaver could easily use up the yarn of six or eight spinners. As there was a great demand for the cloth at this time, the weavers usually found plenty to do, and the carders and spinners were therefore kept very busy. It was no longer a question of preparing wool and cloth only for the use of one's own household; the preparation was now preparation for exchange articles, articles that were made for sale and export. Now carding and spinning were odd-minute occupations; operations that could be taken up in the intervals of other business, and put down when other duties called. They soon became very mechanical tasks, which could be left at a moment's notice and as quickly resumed. Hence throughout the rural areas they became by-industries in which women and children could engage at every spare minute of the day; every girl above the age of five or six could share in the work, every woman under the age of eighty could help in it. We can picture the family sitting around the fire in the room on a winter evening, knitting, spinning or otherwise working the wool, and listening to the old ballads or songs or fairy tales told by the grandmother as they continued busily at their work.

One feature of this life so far as the village was concerned was that the spinning and weaving were mixed with much agricultural work. Men and women would be busily engaged on their patches of land on some days of the week, while on others they would be working at the woollen industry. This combination of agricultural and woollen work

ANN HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE
A country home of the seventeenth century

is a good example of combined occupations of a *seasonal* kind; in the busy agricultural seasons of the year the woollen work would be at a standstill, for all the family would now be in the fields; in the winter time spinning and weaving were the main occupations. In summer the gathering in of the harvest was so essential to the country's welfare, seeing that the food supply depended mainly on what was produced in England and not on what

was imported from abroad, that laws were passed compelling folk to work in the fields at harvest time. This combination also had the advantage of offering the workers a change to an outdoor occupation when they were tired of sedentary labour, though in fine weather much of the spinning was done by the girls and women out of doors.

We can gather from the literature of the time some very interesting pictures of town and country life during this period of domestic industry. Daniel Defoe, for example, the author of *Robinson Crusoe*, journeyed through England at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and, as we should expect, wrote some very vivid impressions of what he saw. Here is one of them, describing the West Riding woollen industry:

> Still the nearer we came to Halifax, we found the Houses thicker, and the villages greater, in every Bottom; and not only so, but the Sides of the Hills, which were very steep every way were spread with Houses; for the Land being divided into small Inclosures, from two acres to six or seven each, seldom more, every three or four Pieces of Land had a House belonging to them.
>
> In short, we found the Country one continued village, tho' every way mountainous, hardly a House standing out of a Speaking distance from another; and as the Day cleared up, we could see at every House a Tenter [a frame for stretching cloth on], and on almost every Tenter a Piece of Cloth, Kersie, or Shalloon, which are the three Articles of this Country's Labour.
>
> In the Course of our Road among the Houses, we found at every one of them a little Rill or Gutter of running Water; if the House was above the Road, it came from it, and crossed the Way to run to another; if the House was below us, it crossed us from some other distant House above it, and at every considerable House was a manufactory, which not being

able to be carried on without Water, these little Streams were so parted and guided by Gutters or Pipes, that not one of the Houses wanted its necessary Appendage of a Rivulet.

Again, as the Dying houses, Scouring shops, and Places where they use this Water, emit it ting'd with the Drugs of the Dying-vat, and with the Oil, the Soap, the Tallow, and other Ingredients used by the Clothiers in Dressing and Scouring, etc.; the Lands through which it passes, which otherwise would be exceeding barren, are enrich'd by it to a Degree beyond Imagination.

Then, as every Clothier must necessarily keep one Horse at least, to fetch home his Wooll and his Provisions from the Market, to carry his Yarn to the Spinners, his Manufacture to the Fulling-mill, and, when finished, to the Market to be sold, and the like; so every one keeps a cow or two for his Family. By this means, the small Pieces of inclosed Land about each House are occupied; and by being thus fed, are still farther improved from the Dung of the Cattle. As for Corn, they scarce sow enough to feed their Cocks and Hens.

Such, it seems, has been the Bounty of Nature to this Country, that two things essential to Life, and more particularly to the Business followed here, are found in it. I mean, Coals and running Water on the tops of the highest Hills. This place seems to have been designed by Providence for the very Purposes to which it is now allotted, for carrying on a manufacture which can nowhere be so easily supplied with the Convenience necessary for it. Nor is the Industry of the People wanting to second these advantages. Tho' we met few People without Doors, yet within we saw the Houses full of Lusty Fellows, some at the Dye-vats, some at the Loom, others dressing the Cloths; the Women and Children carding or spinning; all imployed from the youngest to the oldest, scarce any thing about four Years old, but its hands were sufficient for its own Support.

In fact, in very many parts of England women and children were so employed. The spinning industry invaded the homes of workers in other branches of industry, for the mothers and daughters

of the Wealden ironfield engaged in spinning in their spare time, as did also their neighbours in the purely agricultural districts and in the country towns. The busy housewife still spun her flax, hemp and wool for her own household requisites, even when she had to hand it out to some local weaver (such as Silas Marner) to get it woven into cloth.

The wages paid under this system varied considerably in different districts. In 1685 with hard work a spinster could earn about fourpence a day, in 1728, according to Defoe, twelve or fifteen pence a day; whereas in service a maid could only get twelve to eighteen pence a week, with food of course. A pamphlet of 1737, quoted in the *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire*, gives the following very interesting weekly wage table in the woollen industry. It is the cost of working up one pack of wool into West of England broadcloth.

	£	s.	d.
1 man to sort and dry the wool	0	8	0
Dyeing, cleaning, etc.	1	10	0
4 men and 2 boys to scrible [*i.e.* card] it	2	8	0
30 women and girls to card and spin	6	0	0
4 boys to spool and wind quills	0	10	0
4 women to burle it [*i.e.* pick off loose ends, etc.]	0	12	0
5 women to scour, full, row, shear, rack and press it	3	4	0
8 men to weave it	4	16	0

About the middle of the eighteenth century a man and his family could earn as much as a guinea a week from the woollen trade; and this money combined with his land kept the family going, and made small farms possible also. We must bear in mind, that the payment was a family payment to the head of the family; the young girls and boys

had no separate wages, they received food and clothing, and when they grew up they were provided for at marriage out of the family income and savings.

There are many complaints of unfair treatment from both clothiers and workers. The clothier complains that the work is badly done, the cloth wetted and unduly stretched to make it longer, and so on; the workers complain that when they are paid per reel for spinning, the reels are made larger; where they are paid by weight, false weights are used; they are often charged heavy rents for the looms, and are very much at the clothiers' mercy if they get into arrears of payment; and there are also complaints which show that *truck* — that is, the compulsory purchase of articles of food or other goods from the employer at *his* prices out of wages—is very common; indeed, it is common as early as the fifteenth century.

Other industries also occupied the spare time of the women and girls in many country areas, and some of these owed either their origin or their improvement to the teaching of skilled workers from abroad who were driven to England by religious or political persecution. English industries are very much indebted to the teaching of these foreign refugees. Flemings from Flanders, Dutchmen from Holland, Huguenots from France, came at different times to England, and brought the knowledge of their industries with them. One of these which became very important as a by-industry in many districts was the making of pillow lace, and this still occupies the people of Buckinghamshire and the West Country. Other industries carried on on a smaller scale by families of workers in the remote

country places included basket- and broom-making from the osiers and trees of the country-side, salt-making, and the manufacture of coarse earthenware. In these cases the task of selling the produce was often in the hands of the wives and daughters, who hawked the produce from place to place, and brought back household goods when they had sold out their wares. A little of this remains even to-day; in some parts of England it is no uncommon sight to see women hawking salt, while men and women travelling in caravans and selling articles of wickerwork are to be seen almost everywhere.

Where, however, the work of the country-side was purely agricultural affairs were not so good, for the country-woman's life was in many respects what it had been during the Middle Ages, and there was no considerable change in this respect right on to the nineteenth century. Perhaps the best way to show the never-ending multitude of tasks that fell to the lot of a farmer's wife during the sixteenth century is to quote from a *Book of Husbandry* by Sir Anthony Fitzherbert, which must have proved useful to many agricultural workers. Amongst other things the author, who quotes the old saying that seldom doth the husband thrive without leave of his wife, suggests what is in general the woman's work on a farm. Here are some of the tasks he finds for her.

First sweep the house, dress up the dishboard, and set all things in good order within the house. Milk the kine, suckle the calves, strain the milk, take up and dress the children, provide breakfast, dinner and supper for the family and servants. Arrange for sending corn and malt to the mill for baking and brewing when necessary. Measure it to and from

the mill and see that you have full measure returned. Make butter and cheese when you can. Feed the swine morning and evening, and the poultry in the morning. Look after the hen, duck and goose eggs, and make sittings of them when the fowls are broody; and take care of the chickens. In early March get the garden in order, and then keep it weeded. Sow flax and hemp. The housewife must know all about the treatment of flax and hemp for sheets, board cloths, towels, shirts, smocks, and such other necessaries; therefore her distaff should be always at hand for a pastime, it stops an idle gap, though a woman cannot make a living by the distaff alone. She should have part of the wool of the farm for clothes, blankets, and coverlets; while other duties that may fall to her lot are winnowing corn, making malt, washing, hay-making, harvesting, spreading manure, plough driving, loading hay or corn; going to market to sell dairy produce, poultry or corn, and to buy all the household requisites.

It is no wonder that he adds that at times she has so many things to do that she scarcely knows well where it is best for her to begin. It is interesting to notice that according to Fitzherbert the housewife was often responsible for marketing the produce of the farm. The butter-woman is met with in literature, and we may picture her with her baskets of butter and eggs seated at the base of the butter-cross or market-cross, or exposing her produce for sale elsewhere in the market. Mrs. Gaskell, in *Sylvia's Lovers*, gives us quite an interesting picture of this.

But great changes were taking place in the life of the agricultural districts during these centuries. In Tudor times many of the open fields of the south-eastern and midland counties were enclosed, and changed into separate farms; and the old copy-holders and other descendants of the villeins of the Middle Ages changed into landless farm labourers,

dependent solely, or nearly so, on the wages they earned. In time too, from various causes, the yeomanry—sturdy independent landowners of from twenty to one hundred and fifty acres—disappeared and left only the large landowners or tenant-farmers and the paid labourers with no intermediate grades between, and as prices rose steadily throughout the period the lot of the labourer became harder and harder. Bishop Latimer, in a sermon preached before Edward VI., tells us that his father was a yeoman holding a hundred sheep, and that his mother milked thirty kine. He was able to give his son a good education and his daughter a marriage dowry, and to give hospitality to his neighbours and alms to the poor; whereas his successor could do none of these things owing to the great increase in rents.

No doubt in many cases the standard of comfort was rising, especially in those areas where there were by-industries like spinning and weaving. Houses were being built much better than formerly, and were being divided into separate rooms. As in the case of the homes of the gentry, bedrooms were becoming usual, though they were often constructed so that one had to pass from room to room in order to reach the inner ones. Chimneys were now usual also, and windows were glazed. Vessels of glass and earthenware were commonly used, rushes began to give place to carpets in some instances, or to tiled and sanded floors. Dress was becoming more costly, and new kinds of food were being introduced. But the country lagged very much behind the town in these respects. Many a squire had a carpet only in his best room, and shutters still took the place of the modern

window curtains. Education was rare even in good-class families, and Tony Lumpkins were only too common. This too was the age of the witch-finders, when thousands of poor old women were done to death for witchcraft.

And if this was true of the more fortunate, it is obvious that the position of the labourers was very

ELIZABETHAN LADY AND COUNTRY WOMAN
Note the ruff, the V-shaped bodice, and the farthingale

bad. Many of them still lived in miserable houses with floors of earth covered with rushes, and with probably only one room downstairs and one up. Rising prices made wages insufficient, and in very many cases the wages were fixed on the supposition that the labourer still had land or by-industries, when both of these were gone. Agricultural wages were still regulated by statute, but varied considerably in different parts of the country. In the sixteenth century there are some instances of men and women

harvesters receiving the same rates of pay, but usually the woman receives less than the man. Thus, in 1514 a chief hind, carter, or chief shepherd was to get not more than twenty shillings a year plus food and five shillings for clothing; an ordinary farm servant sixteen-and-eightpence plus food and four shillings; a woman servant ten shillings plus food and four shillings. In harvest time mowers had fourpence a day with food and sixpence without, reapers and carters threepence or fivepence, women labourers twopence or twopence-halfpenny and fourpence. At the end of the century, with wages varying according to the age of the worker, an ordinary farm manservant over twenty-four years of age received thirty shillings, a woman servant twenty shillings and six-and-eightpence for clothing. The lot of the labourers' wives was the hardest of all. Young single women were in great demand, especially as dairymaids, and though they were worked hard, they usually lived in the farm-house and were well fed there; they avoided anything like semi-starvation. Similarly, many married labourers lived in the farm-house during the week, and so were better nourished than their wives at home. The farmer preferred young labourers who lived in the farm-house, for they were under his eye, and could be kept busy all day long. In the North of England girls would as a rule go out in this way into farm service for a time, and then marry some small farmer or cottier, and go out to work only at busy seasons of the year.

During the seventeenth century Parliament was busy enforcing work in agriculture. Unmarried girls

or women from twelve to forty years of age could be compelled to go to service by the year, week, or day; parents could be summoned if they kept their children at home out of service. In harvest time, at any rate, additional labour was required, and at these times married women did much farm work of many kinds for low wages, which varied very much in different localities. By day-work a woman might earn a penny a day with food, or threepence or fourpence without, with perhaps half as much again during harvest. A better way, perhaps, of making clear what was happening in the country districts is the statement of a writer in 1795, to the effect that in the preceding half-century prices had risen one-third, but wages only one-sixth or one-seventh; while another writer of about twenty years earlier estimated that the total income of husband and wife was about eight-and-sixpence a week, of which five-and-threepence had to be spent in bread alone. Such figures show us that the lot of the farm labourer and his family was fast becoming a hopelessly wretched one. It was only young single men and women, hired by the year at the hiring fairs or statute fairs, some of which still remain, though largely now for pleasure purposes, who found their position endurable; and even they could not possibly save much money out of their scanty wages.

CHAPTER VII

TOWN LIFE FROM THE SIXTEENTH TO THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THE sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries mark the great rise in prosperity of the merchant classes rather than the manufacturers, whose turn was to come in the nineteenth century. After the Renaissance trade extended its bounds from Europe to the world, and English merchants shared in the trade throughout the world from America to the East Indies. The result was that manufactures increased in the towns as well as in the country, and new towns began to spring up in the busy manufacturing areas. London was still supreme in importance; Norwich and Bristol still occupied a chief place among English towns, but Leeds was becoming a most important centre of trade, though it had sent its first member to Parliament as recently as Cromwell's time, and Defoe could write of its cloth market as "a Prodigy of its kind, and perhaps not to be equalled in the World." Wakefield, too, he tells us, had its market every Friday for woollen cloths, after the manner of Leeds, though not so great; Sheffield was famous for its knives, razors and lancets; Birmingham, too, was beginning to be of importance.

The shopkeepers of the towns shared in the prosperity of the time, but in the eighteenth century

they still as a rule lived over the shop, and rarely went far afield if they took a holiday. John Gilpin, the linendraper of Cheapside, took no holiday for twenty years, and then intended only to go as far as Edmonton, though he did inadvertently get as far from London as Ware. But by the end of the eighteenth century this was changing, and the shop-

A GENTLEWOMAN, A CITIZEN'S WIFE, AND A COUNTRY WOMAN OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

keepers' wives and daughters were imitating the gentry, and those who could do so were now living in the suburbs and away from the shop.

By the eighteenth century apprenticeship was beginning to die out, with the result that there was much employment of women and girls at low rates of wages. In the seventeenth century girls had been freely apprenticed to many kinds of skilled occupations; there are plenty of instances of their

apprenticeship to such occupations as clock-making, knitting, sewing, millinery, and the like. The poor-law regulations which were established by Elizabeth, and well administered by her Stuart successors, James I. and Charles I., had made some provision for the education of poor children in such occupations as spinning, wool-combing, and knitting. In some localities women were appointed as handicraft teachers for this purpose; women and girl offenders against the law, when imprisoned in houses of correction, were obliged to spin linen or wool as a punishment, and these places of detention were often termed "spinning houses" in consequence.

The women and children of the working classes, however, were benefiting very little from the changes that were taking place, except perhaps in a greater variety of occupation. As in the country so in the town the domestic system of industry was flourishing, and women and children were busily engaged in spinning. "If a stranger was only to ride through or view the city of Norwich, on ordinary days," writes Defoe, "he would be induced to think it a town without inhabitants; but on the contrary, if he was to view the city, either on a Sabbath day, or on any other public occasion, he would wonder where all the people could dwell, the multitude is so great. But the case is this; the inhabitants, being all so busy at their manufactures, dwell in their garrets at their looms, and in their combing-shops, as they call them, twisting-mills, and other workhouses; almost all the work they are employed in, being done within doors." Spinning and knitting occupied the children of Norwich to so great an extent that a

writer of 1671 computed that the children between the ages of six and ten earned £12,000 more than they spent, chiefly by knitting fine stockings. And even so the demand for yarn was so great that yarn was spun for the Norwich weavers in Essex, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire, and even so far afield as Yorkshire. It was estimated that about the middle of the eighteenth century as many as 36,000 Suffolk women and children were engaged in combing wool and spinning yarn for the Norwich worsted weavers. About the middle of the eighteenth century a woman might earn in this way from eightpence to ninepence a day, and a girl get threepence or fourpence a day from the weaver for winding and filling his quills.

Other industries came with the foreign immigrants: the lace industry has already been mentioned; starch was introduced to Elizabeth's court from Flanders, and gave rise to much work for women; silk-weaving was very important; the Silk Throwsters' Company was incorporated in London in 1629, and fifty years later was employing 40,000 men, women and children; needle-making came with the Huguenots; dressmaking, feather-making, embroidery, and the making of beads, bugles, and other dress ornaments, kept many women and girls busily employed; girls were frequently apprenticed as milliners and sempstresses.

Women shopkeepers were still very common; they were makers of bread and confectionery, fishmongers, butchers and brewsters, though brewing was passing into the hands of the large brewers. There were plenty of women pedlars and hucksters; the splendid series of pictures illustrating the London

cries of the eighteenth century gives us fishwives, China orange sellers, milkmaids with their pails suspended from their shoulders by wooden yokes, newspaper women, eel sellers, strawberry sellers, cherry sellers, with their cry of "Cherry ripe," sellers of table baskets, flower women, and those who sang "Will you buy my sweet-scented lavender?"

Miss Clarke, who has made a special study of the work of women in the seventeenth century, gives upholstering, wax-chandlery, millinery and mantua making as trades in which married women especially were engaged; and in businesses requiring capital, instances pawnbroking, money-lending, and contracting for army and navy stores as examples. She quotes also the interesting cases of Joan Dant, the widow of a working weaver of Spitalfields, who started as a pedlar, but became an important trader and died worth more than £9,000; and Dorothy Petty, the daughter of a clergyman, who established an insurance office in London and carried on the business with fairness, justice, and success. Widows also frequently carried on their husbands' businesses successfully in many branches of trade and industry, but the number of women engaged in business tends to diminish as time goes on.

One occupation for girls which had been in existence since the Middle Ages was increasing in the number of girls employed—that, namely, of domestic service. In earlier times much of the indoor work had been done by the apprentices and the family, now it was being handed over to the maids. A Dutchman who visited London in the days of good Queen Bess thought it a paradise for married women,

a purgatory for horses, and a hell for servants, and in many cases service was a hard task; in Elizabethan times maids rose at three in the morning. There are many complaints of maids pilfering and thieving from the houses in which they were in service; there is the usual complaint that girls avoid domestic service if they can get other occupations, and so servants are scarce. According to Defoe, in 1725, women servants were so scarce that wages had increased from thirty or forty shillings a year to six, seven, or even eight pounds, "insomuch that an ordinary tradesman cannot well keep one, but his wife, who might be useful in his shop or business, must do the drudgery of household affairs; and all this because our servant-wenches are so puffed up with pride nowadays, that they never think they go fine enough; it is a hard matter to know the mistress from the maid by their dress; nay often the maid shall be the finer of the two." In the families of the gentry many menservants were kept; you will find an interesting chapter on them and their ways in *Pickwick Papers*, where Dickens describes the "swarry" at which Sam Weller was entertained by a number of menservants at Bath.

Although wages generally were rising in the towns, prices were rising also, and at a much more rapid rate. In the days of Elizabeth sugar cost half-a-crown a pound, and raisins sixpence to tenpence; nutmegs were twopence-halfpenny, ginger a penny, and cinnamon fourpence an ounce. Soon after the Restoration tea was sixty shillings a pound, sugar was down to sixpence a pound, rice was sevenpence, raisins and currants twopence. Bacon was seven-

pence and butter eightpence a pound; one could buy a leg of mutton for half-a-crown. Eight years later mutton was twopence-halfpenny a pound, in 1760 it was threepence and beef twopence-halfpenny a pound. But money had between four and five times the purchasing power that it had at the beginning of the twentieth century. In London in the eighteenth century a ready-made stuff gown could be bought for six-and-sixpence; a linsey-woolsey petticoat for four-and-six, shoes for three shillings to three-and-ninepence, stays (warranted to last six years) cost six shillings, a coloured neckerchief a shilling, a cheap cloak which would last two years, four-and-six; a cap tenpence, and a cheap hat one-and-eight. In Cumberland a hat could be obtained for one-and-eight, a linen bedgown for five-and-six, a neckerchief for one-and-six, two flannel petticoats, the upper one dyed blue, for eleven-and-six the two, and coarse woollen home-made stockings for one-and-eight, while woollen gowns were made at home from six yards of material at one-and-six a yard. About 1680, gloves cost two shillings a pair; silk stockings ten shillings, and cheap stockings six shillings a pair. Tobacco in the days of Elizabeth cost three-and-sixpence an ounce, and a pipeful was shared by a number of persons. Bread made of white wheat flour was too expensive for the poor always to buy, they had to be satisfied on occasion with rye or barley bread, or in some parts of England with oatcakes.

The eighteenth century was in most respects a very brutal age. In the first half of the seventeenth century the Puritans had set a high standard of

morality for themselves, and had tried to force other persons to live up to it also. A reaction came with the Restoration, and from thence onward in many cases things went from bad to worse. In 1800 there were more than two hundred crimes punishable by death, including stealing from a shop goods worth five shillings; from the person to the value of one shilling; from a dwelling house to the value of forty shillings. Women were still burned to death, though they were usually mercifully strangled before the fire was lighted. All punishments were public spectacles, which were enjoyed by the populace—"If an offender was put into the pillory, it was well if he escaped with life from the shower of brickbats and paving-stones. If he was tied to the cart's tail, the crowd pressed round him, imploring the hangman to give it the fellow well, and make him howl. Gentlemen arranged parties of pleasure to Bridewell on court days for the purpose of seeing the wretched women who beat hemp there whipped. A man pressed to death for refusing to plead, a woman burned for coining, excited less sympathy than is now felt for a galled horse or an overdriven ox. The prisons were hells on earth, seminaries of every crime and every disease. At the assizes the lean and yellow culprits brought with them from their cells to the dock an atmosphere of stench and pestilence which sometimes avenged them signally on bench, bar, and jury." The public burning of women was not abolished till 1790; they were still publicly whipped till 1817, and privately till 1820.

It says something for the humanity of the people

that where the penalty was death juries were often unwilling to convict even in the face of the evidence, or if they found a prisoner guilty they made the total value of the goods stolen four-and-tenpence, thirty-nine shillings, or elevenpence-halfpenny, as the case might be, and so allowed the prisoner to escape death. But even then guilt was followed by transportation to a colony where the life was practically a life of slavery, and the voyage out was a terrible experience for any woman.

The streets were ill-paved, noisy, and dirty; the roads around the towns were infested with highwaymen. Women emptied their pails from the bedroom windows, with little regard for those who were passing below. There were no rain-water pipes to carry the water from the house to the street drains, and when it rained the water shot out from rain spouts projecting a few feet from the eaves of the houses. In wet weather women went in pattens to avoid the mud, and loose cobblestones squirted mud and water over the gaily-dressed people who were walking along the streets. The gutters were wide ditches filled with all kinds of dirt, and the well-disposed were careful to allow women to take the inside of the pavement.

At night the ill-lighted streets were so dangerous that no woman ventured out without a bodyguard; it was even dangerous for maids to open the door. Half-drunken roysterers paraded the streets, and found amusement in insulting women and beating the old men who acted as watchmen. Bands of these young persons, known as Mohocks, made the streets impossible for all decent persons who did not go

in bands, with cudgels or swords to use in case of need. In the absence of lamps, link-boys could be employed to light people through the streets. The railings in front of many London houses still have on them the large iron extinguishers in which the torch could be extinguished when the boy had brought the persons he was guiding safely to their homes.

Many of the amusements were of a similar brutal kind. Fighting was popular with all classes; there were even women prize-fighters, who had to fight with coins in their fists to prevent them from opening their hands and using their finger-nails; bull-baiting, bear-baiting, and cock-fighting were still common. Everybody gambled; women had private card-parties or attended the gaming houses, where the rich played for very high stakes. The Government pandered to the gambling craze by sanctioning lotteries and using them as a means of raising loans, and the craze was responsible for the ruin of many persons and for many deaths by suicide.

Drunkenness abounded in all classes of society, and was made worse after 1724 by the introduction of gin. Gin-drinking became a terrible national vice, which the Government was finally compelled to check by means of heavy duties and licences. Men of the upper and middle classes also frequented the coffee-houses, which had been in existence since the days of the Commonwealth. These places of resort became important social centres, where all kinds of topics were discussed; they were the lounge of the idler, the meeting-place of gamblers, the recognised centres for various kinds of business—

even the place where the best medical men could be consulted.

This was the age also of lax marriage laws, and therefore of Fleet Prison marriages and elopements to Gretna Green. Young ladies, especially if they were heiresses, were at the mercy of dissolute gentlemen or smooth-tongued adventurers, and many of them suffered in consequence, until Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act, 1753, did something to prevent clandestine marriages.

PURITAN LADY
(Seventeenth century)

The use of brick and glass, and the planning of houses with separate rooms, ensured much better houses; and the rise in the standard of comfort made the town houses much more comfortable by the addition of furniture and carpets and other useful articles of many kinds; indeed, in comforts of this kind the town was very much in advance of the country. By the end of the eighteenth century, too, the piano had come into use, and was displacing the earlier harpsichord. One drawback to household development in the seventeenth century had been the tax on chimneys, which had brought into the Exchequer the sum of £200,000 per annum, and had given rise to much resentment owing to the harsh manner in which it was collected. Where there were gardens, these too showed improvement; many more things were grown in them, including turnips and potatoes, which were becoming in the eighteenth

century important articles of food among the poorer classes.

Dress became a very important item in town life during the eighteenth century. In the preceding century the Puritans had dressed very soberly in opposition to the extravagant dresses of Cavalier lords and ladies; in the eighteenth century men dressed in satins and flowered silks, while the ladies used dainty flowered silks, beautiful lace, and lovely flowering embroideries. Fashions changed too. At one time the ladies wore enormous hoops, at another they preferred short-waisted tight gowns; at one time they wore straw hats trimmed with flowers, at another they padded their hair into monstrous pyramids two or three feet high. Muffs were used by both men and women in the eighteenth century, so popular were they. Women of the middle classes did not go to such extremes; in the seventeenth century they favoured tall felt hats and red cloaks over a black dress, such as one sees in pictures of Mother Shipton or of witches. Such a hat and cloak are still worn at the almshouses at Castle Rising, in Norfolk. Poorer folk wore plain stuff gowns, and many of them went stockingless, though all but the very poorest had boots. In the next century cottons, muslins and

ROYALIST LADY
(Seventeenth century)

printed calicoes came into use and gave simplicity and variety to the dress of the middle classes, though the poor were still miserably clad. Umbrellas were introduced by Jonas Hanway in 1756; his first walk with an umbrella in the London streets was in the nature of a daring experiment. It took many years to popularise this useful article, and in the meantime ladies took refuge from the bad weather in thick cloaks, and from the mud and dirt of the street in pattens—clogs or soles of wood mounted on an iron support in the form of a ring, so as to raise the feet of the wearer out of the wet. These articles were in common use, and the Pattenmakers were an important London company, but with street drainage they have become unnecessary. The poet Gay, in his *Trivia*, gives an interesting picture of the streets of London at all times of the day and year:

FASHIONS IN THE EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

> But when the swinging signs your ears offend
> With creaking noise, then rainy floods impend;
> Soon shall the kennels swell with rapid streams,
> And rush in muddy torrents to the Thames.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Good housewives all the winter's rage despise,
> Defended by the riding-hood's disguise,
> Or underneath th' umbrella's oily shed,
> Safe thro' the wet on clinking pattens tread.

Education was for the most part still reserved for

the rich, and was not considered necessary for girls even then. To be too clever was looked upon as a disqualification in a wife. But opportunities for wider education were creeping in, if only in the form of the dame-schools, in which some lady of doubtful learning herself doled out a scanty education that did not go far beyond a stumbling reading, which started with the alphabet from the hornbook and progressed as far as Bible texts, and not very successful writing. "It's little they pays us, and it's little we learns them," was the confession of one of them. Yet these old ladies did something to lessen the load of ignorance around them and prepared the way for better things. In other directions too came opportunities, for newspapers came into existence, and books were multiplying by the end of the eighteenth century, and were replacing the older broadsheets and songs, ballads and romances. Sunday-schools and charity schools, with the help of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, which was founded in 1697, took up the work towards the end of the eighteenth century; and as their work was directed to the spiritual welfare of the children, girls began to share equally in the education given—for girls, too, had souls to save as well as boys. Reading, writing and arithmetic were taught to the boys; reading, writing and sewing to the girls.

In these centuries the professional classes were beginning to make headway and establish themselves in the community, not always to the advantage of women workers. Thus, the more important the doctor became, the less was the housewife called upon to do what she had done so long in caring

for the sicknesses of the household. Midwifery too, which had been an important woman's occupation, became associated with the doctor's practice among the richer people in the eighteenth century, though not among the poor, who could not afford to pay for a doctor. Nor were there many opportunities for women to work as nurses for the same reason, and also because, now that the care of the sick and needy had been dissociated from religion, it was looked upon as a menial task fit only for the poor to perform.

Acting was undertaken by women after the Restoration; in Shakespeare's time the women's parts were played by boys, and the public theatres were in such poor repute that ladies who visited them usually went in masks. The stage declined in moral tone for some years after the Restoration, but there were many very successful actresses throughout the eighteenth century.

Teaching, except in the dame-schools, was not yet an occupation employing many women. At first there was for various reasons considerable prejudice against women teachers. One great Renaissance teacher, indeed, goes so far as to write: "It neither becometh a woman to rule a school, nor to live among men. Because a woman is a frail thing and of weak discretion, and may lightly be deceived, which thing our first mother Eve sheweth, whom the Devil caught in a light argument. Therefore a woman should not teach, lest when she hath taken a false opinion and belief of anything, she spread it into her hearers, by the authority of mastership, and lightly bring others into the same error, for the learners commonly do after the teacher with good will."

PART III

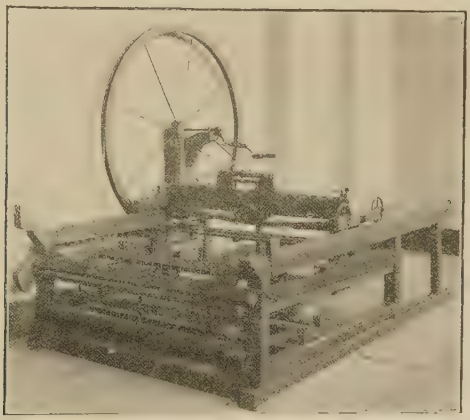
THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND THE IRON AGE

CHAPTER VIII

GREAT CHANGES IN INDUSTRY

TRADE in England made very great advances under the domestic system of industry. The geographical discoveries which had started at the time of the Renaissance were continued, the older colonies were developed, and new lands were discovered which served either as good centres for trade or as homes for people who went out from their own country to colonise them. All this meant increased trade; the new lands produced foods of many kinds, such as sugar, rice, maize, oranges, etc., which could not grow in Britain, or raw materials, such as cotton, hemp, flax, etc., which were useful in British industries, and British merchants sent back many kinds of manufactured goods in return. One reason why they were able to do this was that there was now much more money in the country. The years of peace and prosperity of the seventeenth century had resulted in a great deal of saving, and there was plenty of money now seeking investment. The South Sea Bubble, 1720, is a proof of this, for it

shows that people were putting their money into foolish investments for lack of good ones. By the middle of the eighteenth century the demand for British goods for export—cotton and woollen cloths, iron goods and earthenware—was becoming considerably greater than the supply; and although weavers and spinners and other workers were kept busily engaged, it was impossible for them to pro-

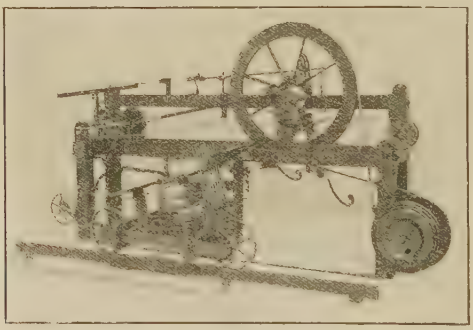


THE SPINNING-JENNY

duce the goods fast enough, especially in the production of cotton and woollen cloths.

The fact was that much of the work, and especially the spinning, was done by very slow processes, requiring very much time for their performance. It took eight or ten people to make enough yarn to keep one weaver busy, and often the weaver was left without yarn to weave. What was wanted was a quicker way of spinning the woollen and cotton yarns; the old hand-spinning with a spinning-wheel

was too slow a process. We often say that necessity is the mother of invention, and so it certainly was here. For the need for a better spinning machine was soon followed by the invention of a machine which would spin cotton yarns. The story goes that about 1764 a Blackburn carpenter, named Hargreaves, noticed that the wheel of his wife's spinning-wheel, which she had overturned just as he entered the

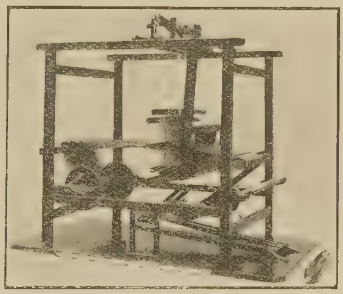


CROMPTON'S MULE

house, remained rotating in a horizontal position for a considerable time. From this he got the idea of such a wheel rotating and giving its motion to a number of spindles which could be used for spinning cotton yarn. Out of this came his spinning-jenny, so called from his wife's name, which could spin as many as eight threads at a time. Improvements on this machine were made a few years later by Richard Arkwright, a barber of Bolton, who also used water as motive power to drive the wheel; and then in 1779 Samuel Crompton, a spinner of Bolton, combined the best points of the two machines in his spinning-mule, or muslin frame as it was also called,

for now a machine had been made which would spin a cotton thread fine enough yet strong enough to weave into fine muslin. Up to this time all cotton goods had been mixtures of cotton and linen; for it had been impossible to make a cotton yarn strong enough to stand stretching as the warp threads have to be stretched on the weaving loom, and linen threads had been used for this purpose instead.

With these machines, spinning was so speeded up that the weaver was now beaten by the quantities of yarn made for him; and so new weaving looms were needed. There had already been some changes in the loom. In 1733 John Kay had invented a *flying* shuttle, which was jerked mechanically across the loom carrying the weft with it. This enabled wider pieces of cloth to be woven. Before this invention a piece of cloth could not be wider than the width of a man's outstretched arms, for he had to pass the shuttle through from left to right with his left hand, and back again with his right, unless two men were engaged on one loom. What was wanted now was a loom which would work without hand labour, a loom driven by some form of motive power. Weaving was a very hard task for anyone to engage in. A weaver used both arms and both legs when working at the loom, and the cramped position in which he sat at the machine was very hurtful to



HAND-LOOM

his health; especially, too, as he usually worked in a small and badly-ventilated room. You have probably read the story of Silas Marner, who was a hand-loom weaver. Now that the hand-loom could no longer produce cloth as fast as it was wanted, persons began to turn their attention to the making of a loom which could be driven by some other form of power, such as water or steam; and soon a really effective power-loom was introduced. The first power-loom, 1785, was the work of Edmund Cartwright, a clergyman of Kent; the power first used by him was obtained from an ox walking round in a ring, and so turning a wheel which would produce the power required. Farmers still use a horse in this way nowadays when grinding corn or chopping hay or turnips, and until recently there were merry-go-rounds and things of that kind driven round in a similar fashion at our country fairs.

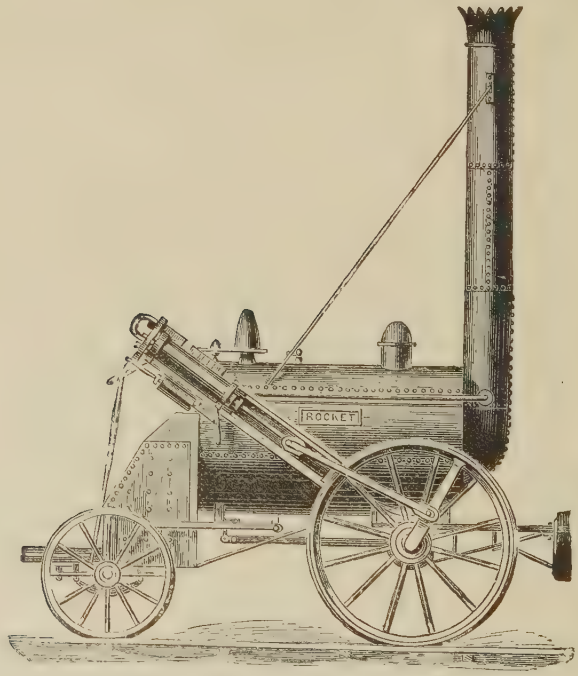
All these inventions were at first associated with the making of cotton goods; but they proved so wonderfully successful that the makers of woollen and linen goods soon adopted them, with other inventions, for their own work, larger quantities of goods were made, and trade and commerce increased considerably. But before trade could develop to its full extent, other things were necessary. In the first place, a satisfactory form of power to drive these machines was lacking; many makers were using water, and in consequence many mills were being built in places where there was a good fall of water, such as the slopes of the Pennine Chain. But the supply of water sufficient to drive a mill wheel could not always be depended upon, it might fail

in a dry season, and something surer than that was wanted. It came in 1785 in the form of the steam engine, which from being a means of pumping the water from coal mines had been cleverly developed and improved by a Glasgow engineer named James Watt, who came to Birmingham and associated himself with a manufacturer named Matthew Bolton who had money to invest in engine-making. Their steam engine was soon in use in very many industries; it was useful in pumping operations in mines, in all operations of weaving and spinning, in driving knitting looms, in the making of iron in blast furnaces, and so on; and goods of all kinds were being produced more speedily than ever.

But now that the export of these goods was becoming so considerable and important, another problem had to be faced. The lack of good roads made it very difficult to get the manufactures from the places where they were made to the seaport towns, and on the other hand to get the raw materials of industry transferred from the seaports to the manufacturing districts. Pack-horses were still being used for the carriage of goods, and it was no uncommon sight to see a string of them moving along the roads with their double panniers, though at most a horse's load could not exceed about two hundred and fifty pounds. People who had to travel, too, still preferred to do so on horseback; if a carriage was necessary, one carried ropes and spades also, for it was never certain that one would not have to dig oneself out of the mire. With the demand for better roads, attention was paid to this in earnest; and after the middle of the eighteenth century the main roads were

so much improved that the pack-horse disappeared in favour of the quickly-moving coach for passengers and light goods, and the slower road wagons which conveyed loads of heavy goods.

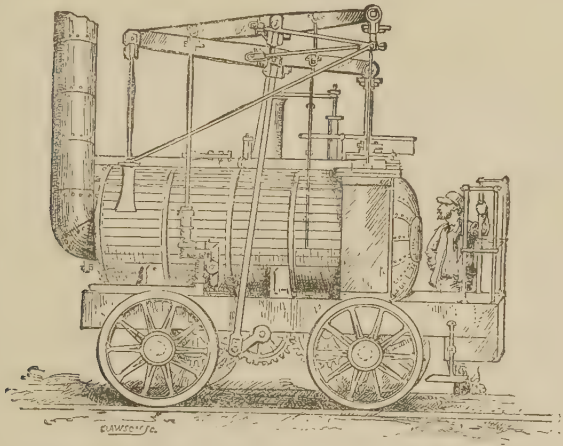
Other improvements followed; James Brindley



EARLY TYPE OF LOCOMOTIVE—THE "ROCKET," 1813

became famous as a builder of canals, and with the help of sturdy labourers, called navigators or navvies from the particular nature of their task, he and his successors gave to England a set of canals which linked London and the other seaports with the

manufacturing and coal-producing areas. Before the canals had been fully developed, the invention of the steam locomotive, and improvements in it by Blackett and Stephenson and others, led to the use of the railway as the great means of both passenger and goods traffic; while the use of steam on ships began a revolution in the means of carrying goods across the oceans.



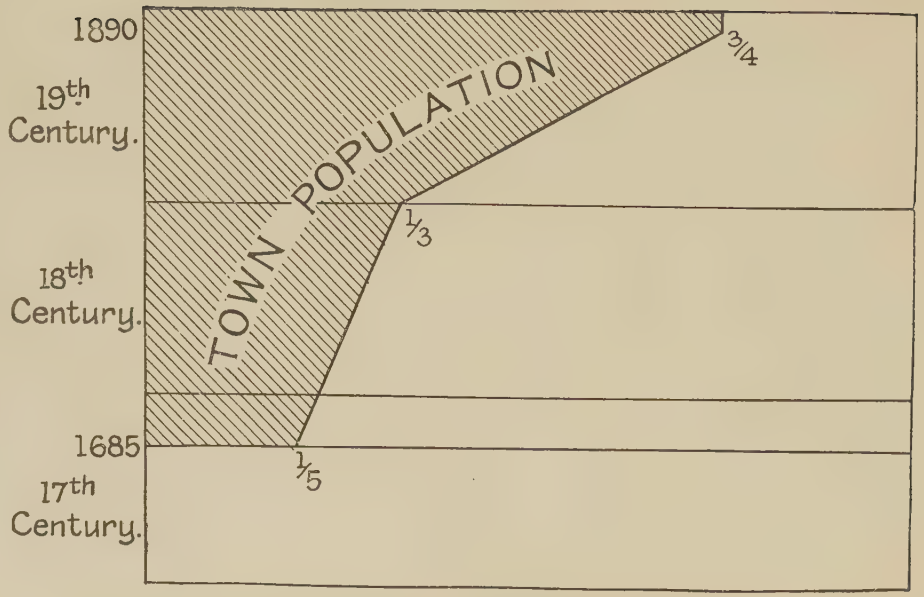
EARLY TYPE OF LOCOMOTIVE—"PUFFING BILLY," 1829

All these changes had very great effects on British life, effects which were not always good ones. Now that steam was becoming the usual means of motive power factories had to be built, for steam power could not be successfully produced on a small scale. All kinds of buildings were therefore turned into factories, often with as little expense as possible, and were filled with spinning and weaving machines. Very much money was put into all kinds of industrial

enterprises; trade developed very rapidly indeed, and the banks became very important as providers of the capital required for these developments.

As a result of these alterations the old domestic system of industry which was described in Chapter VI. disappeared in many branches of work, and the men and women who combined the work of spinning and weaving with some work in agriculture went with it. A change was also taking place in country life about this time by which the old methods of farming, with their strips of land divided among the villagers and their big open commons on which the cattle and sheep of the villagers could graze together, were now passing away. The land was being divided into enclosed fields, and was being shared among the people of the district, often to the great disadvantage of the poorer folk, who were losing the little pieces of land they had possessed until now, and so were becoming simply farm labourers dependent entirely on the wages they could earn by working on the farms. This change, coming as it did about the same time as the disappearance of the by-industries of the domestic system, was harmful to the villagers, however necessary and useful it was to people generally. For the change was useful in that it enabled better systems of farming to come into use, with good results in the production of food, both animal and vegetable.

The domestic system of industry disappeared, then, because of the introduction of factories which came with the use of steam as the common source of power. The workers of the machines were now collected together into the factories with their hundreds of



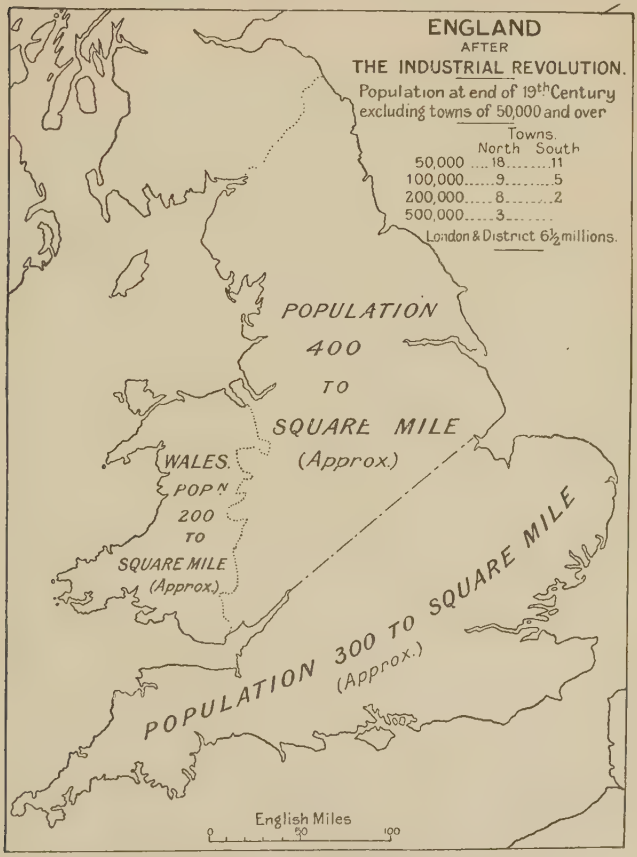
GROWTH OF ENGLISH TOWN POPULATION SINCE 1685

machines, instead of working as they had formerly done in their own homes, with their one or two machines in each. Hours of work were very long, as we shall see, and the means of getting to and from work were very poor, hence the workers had perforce to live near the factories, and so began the crowding of people into the large towns which are so marked a feature of Britain. In 1685 the people living in urban areas had only been about twenty per cent. of the population of England and Wales, in 1922 the census returns give over seventy-nine per cent. of the total population as living under urban conditions. In the last thirty years the percentage of urban dwellers has risen from seventy-two per cent. to seventy-nine per cent. of the whole.

At the same time the production of manufactured goods increased tremendously, with changes in the relative importance of the quantities of different kinds of goods produced. Up to this time England's most important industry had been the woollen manufacture; now woollens became second in importance to cottons. There were also great changes in the linen trade, in framework knitting, lace-making, silk-weaving, and in the manufacture of pottery, changes due partly to the increased demand for these various goods, and partly to the discovery of new inventions or improved methods of manufacture in the different industries.

Coal-mining, too, became very important, for coal was necessary to make the steam used as motive power; while the introduction of machinery made in whole or in part of iron made the preparation of iron and steel and their conversion into machinery

by the engineering trades equally important. Other industries shared in the stimulus to trade and



ENGLAND AFTER THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

industry which followed this industrial revolution. Shipbuilders were kept busy in the coast towns, bricklayers, carpenters, and all associated with the

building trades were occupied in building new factories and new houses; large towns grew up in areas which had been rural spots but a few years previously.

For the new areas of industry were the areas where coal and iron were to be found, and especially where these two all-important materials of the new Iron Age were to be found together. The slopes of the Pennines in Lancashire, Yorkshire and Cheshire, the moorlands and chases of Staffordshire, the coal- and iron-fields of South Wales, the coal-fields of Lowland Scotland, and the seaports around the coast became busy centres of industry filled with rapidly-increasing populations.

Unfortunately in the stress and strain of these years of rapid change, combined as they were with the troubles of a great war against Napoleon, very many things were permitted from which the nation as a whole has suffered; things which can now only be looked back upon with regret. Amongst them were changes which affected very closely the lives of thousands of working women and children.

CHAPTER IX

EFFECT ON THE POSITION OF THE WOMEN IN THE TOWNS

THE great change in the methods of work which was described in the preceding chapter was bound to have very far-reaching consequences on the women and girls engaged in industry. As we have seen, the change was very largely a change from real *manual* labour—from work done by hand—to work done by machinery. Now this is a change which usually brings with it a good deal of unemployment and distress during the period of the change. The machine does the work much more quickly, and consequently, at first, many people are thrown out of work. At the same time the machine is producing the goods very much more cheaply, and so larger quantities of goods can be sold. Hence in the long run it is likely that the introduction of machinery will be followed by a much greater demand for the goods made than was the case when they were made by hand, and so there will be very many more workers wanted than were wanted in the old days of hand labour. But it takes time for these markets to be developed, and in the meantime there is much unemployment and want and unrest.

There are many examples of this in English industrial history about this time. Framework knitting had been an important industry from the times

of good Queen Bess, and engaged many workers, especially women and girls, in every class of life. This stocking-frame machine was the invention of a clergyman named William Lee, and the story goes that his invention was due to the fact that his ladylove was always so engrossed with her continual knitting when he went to visit her that she could never spare any time for lovemaking. He could therefore only sit and watch the movements of her fingers, and the result of this close attention to her work was that he was able to construct a machine which could copy her stitch, and so deprive her of the necessity of continuous knitting. Many improvements were made in Lee's machine as time went on; the most important was a new machine patented by Strutt in 1758 which enabled stockings to be knitted with ribs. During the early years of the nineteenth century there was much rioting in the hosiery areas, and very many machines were destroyed, the ringleader in these Luddite riots, as they were called, being a half-witted fellow named Ned Ludd. So also when Arkwright had improved the spinning machine, he was forced to leave Lancashire and set up his spinning-mill at Cromford in Derbyshire, because of the opposition of the spinners. A hundred and fifty years before this, when Dudley began to use coal and coke for smelting iron in the Black Country, his workshop was destroyed by the iron workers, who thought that he was taking their living away from them.

The first industry to get the change into full working order was the cotton industry; the change in the woollen industry came more slowly, and

started first of all in the weaving of worsteds; linen became a power-machine industry in the early years of the nineteenth century; the hosiery trade remained a domestic industry perhaps longer than any other of the greater trades.

The change to factory labour was full of evils where women and children were concerned. We must not suppose, however, that in the days of the domestic system of industry the life of boys and girls was nearly so happy as it usually is nowadays. Boys and girls of the poorer classes got very little education. Very many of them got none at all. What the more fortunate ones did obtain was only the education of the dame-school, or its equivalent. But whereas in the days of domestic industry the work of the children was only an adjunct to that of their parents, and was intermittent in character, in the early days of the Industrial Revolution it was the very basis of industry, and was continuous work for very long hours each day.

We have already spoken of the eighteenth century as a century of brutality, and in industry the term is only too true. Parents were often the worst offenders in their treatment of their own children. It is well to remember this, because very much has been written about the treatment of the children who worked in the factories and were very badly treated there. Parents of careless or drunken disposition hired out their children from about six years of age for long periods of time in order that they might live in laziness on the money, and even kind parents worked their children from an early age, and for long hours at a time. Hence in the days before the

factories, when work was carried on under the system of domestic industry, the children of such parents might suffer very much from long hours of work, and become home slaves if not factory slaves. They might be set to work as soon as they could crawl and be kept at it for long hours, and there was no one to interfere on their behalf. There were many things which even little girls could do about the house, and there was always the spinning-wheel or the preparation of cotton or wool for spinning when other work failed.

Here is a very interesting passage in the life of Samuel Crompton, who, you will remember, was the inventor of the wonderful spinning-mule which caused such a revolution in the method of production of cotton goods: "I recollect that soon after I was able to walk, I was employed in the cotton manufacture. My mother used to bat the cotton wool in a wire riddle. It was then put into a deep brown mug with a strong ley of soap-suds. My mother then tucked up my petticoat and put me into the mug to tread upon the cotton at the bottom. When a second riddleful was batted I was lifted out. It was placed in the mug and I again trod it down. The process was continued until the mug became so full that I could no longer safely stand in it, when a chair was placed beside it and I held on by the back."

But however bad the conditions were in the domestic industry, the Industrial Revolution certainly added to the horrors of it so far as women and children were concerned, and the story of what happened in the first years of its development makes such painful reading that one would pass over it

in silence if one dared to do so. But it is a story of which something must be told, if only in order that we may all make up our minds that such a state of things shall never occur again.

The first machines made for spinning were comparatively small and light ones, which only needed watching so that threads could be mended as soon as they broke, and everything kept in good running order, and it was possible for two or three of these machines to be entrusted to the care of a boy or girl. Similarly, women could look after spinning or weaving machines as well as men, and so were employed for this purpose. There was therefore a good deal of *labour shifting*; for women and children worked much more cheaply than men. Many men were thrown out of employment; the need for the money earned by the women and children became very strong if the family income was to be maintained, and so the old family life of the domestic system was broken down. Under the old domestic system the earnings were family earnings, and were retained by the father or mother as head of the family; under the factory system the boys and girls were paid separately, and it was possible in many cases for them to keep all or a portion of this money for their own use. Mothers were left with much less money with which to carry on the household at a time of falling wages and rising prices. This, coupled with the fact that mothers at work in factories could not attend to the cares and duties of the household as they had formerly done in the intervals of their work at home, caused a sad deterioration in home life. Even the best of mothers after working in the mill

for twelve or more hours per day had but little time left to devote to domestic duties and the care of her children, and the children had to be left to the tender mercies of some very young girl or old person who could no longer work in the mill.

Not only so, but as there was a great demand for this form of labour owing to its cheapness, no care was taken to find out whether the work was within the capacity of the women and children employed, or what were the conditions under which they worked, or what the number of hours which they were compelled to work. This terrible state of affairs continued for quite a long time, until at length public opinion was roused against it, and Parliament instituted commissions of enquiry in order to find out exactly what was happening. Here are some of the results of their enquiries.

One of the ways of finding cheap workers, especially where mills were being worked by water power in the remoter country districts, was to take from the workhouses of the towns a number of pauper children as apprentices to the industry. Oliver Twist, you will remember, was such a pauper child. These boys and girls, without friends or protectors, were handed over by the authorities to the care of the millowners. They were forced to work long hours in the mills, from five in the morning till nine o'clock at night, one girl tells us in the evidence she gave, and if she flagged in her work she was severely beaten with a strap. There were no regular hours for meals, and what food could be obtained was snatched by mouthfuls while the machines were still working, and eaten in the stuffy, dirty rooms of the mill, amidst

the whirl and noise of machinery, the smell of oil, and the dust and fluff of the cotton or wool. Girls who ran away from their work were brought back, flogged as a punishment, and then forced to live, sleeping or waking, with chains fastened to their ankles, for fear they might run away again. They might even be sent to gaol because they had broken the contract entered into between the employers and the Poor Law Guardians who had acted as their guardians. When such a girl had spent a year in gaol, she had to go back to the mill and work without wages until she had compensated the master for the loss of her time. "A new slave trade grew up in England, children even being bought and sold, if through bankruptcy or other reasons their original employer desired to part with them before their indentures were complete."

Many girls died under the strain of such conditions; most of them were stunted in growth, or even deformed in body. Nothing else could be expected when girls of six or seven years of age were beginning work at four o'clock in the morning and working from thirteen to eighteen hours per day. Mr. Fielden estimated that a child who followed a spinning machine as a piecer would walk about twenty miles in twelve hours. This is what one writer of the time says about the poor parish apprentices and their work: "The custom was for the master to clothe his apprentices and to feed and lodge them in an apprentice house near the factory; overseers were appointed to see to the works, whose interest it was to work the children to the utmost, because their pay was in proportion to the quantity of work they could extract.

Cruelty was, of course, the consequence; and there is abundance of evidence on record, and preserved in the recollections of some who still live, to show that in many of the manufacturing districts, but particularly, I am afraid, in the guilty county[1] to which I belong, cruelties the most heart-rending were practised upon the unoffending and friendless creatures who were thus consigned to the charge of master manufacturers; that they were harassed to the brink of death by excess of labour, that they were flogged, fettered, and tortured in the most exquisite refinement of cruelty, that they were in many cases starved to the bone while flogged to their work, and that even in some instances they were driven to commit suicide to evade the cruelties of a world in which, though born to it so recently, their happiest moments had been passed in the garb and coercion of a workhouse." It is no wonder they died; indeed, the death rate was so heavy that the employers often buried the little ones in the dead of night and in out-of-the-way places for fear of the consequences.

But the evils were not confined to the pauper apprentices, terrible though their lot must have been. Little boys and girls went from their homes to work in the factories as day workers, from the age of five or six; there is one instance mentioned of a girl commencing work at four years of age, and a boy at three. It is impossible to give more than one or two examples, but here is a short summary of some of the evidence given by a father[2] before a Com-

[1] Lancashire.

[2] It should be pointed out that parents were often forced to let their children work in the mills, for parish relief was refused to parents who had children that could be sent to the mills, and

mittee of Enquiry in 1832. In the busy time, which lasted about six weeks, the girls worked from three in the morning till ten or half-past ten at night, with a quarter-hour interval for breakfast, half an hour for dinner, and a quarter-hour for drinking; but these intervals were often used for cleaning the machines, and then the food had to be snatched whenever possible, or brought home again untouched. If they were five minutes late in the morning, they lost a quarter of a day. It was eleven before they went to bed, and they had to be called again at two. They had to be picked up asleep, and shaken before they could wake; sometimes they went to sleep while eating their supper. At work they were beaten with a strap if they slowed up at all, however tired they might be. One of them lost a finger through an accident while at work, and her wages were stopped immediately. For such a week's work they received three-and-sevenpence-halfpenny, and some of this had to be spent at their master's shop. No wonder that children grew up stunted or deformed, or that infectious diseases, harboured by the foulness of the ill-ventilated, dirty workshops, ran riot amongst these little ones whenever it appeared.

This is the dark side, no doubt, of the picture, but the reports of Royal Commissions prove that it is not an exaggerated one. There were, however, masters of the opposite kind, and some of the witnesses examined before the various commissions speak well of their masters and of the happiness of their

sometimes masters made it a condition of the employment of a father that he brought his children with him.

work. There was one mill, at any rate, that showed that evil conditions were not a necessary part of factory work and factory life. This was a factory at New Lanark in Scotland which was controlled by a great social reformer named Robert Owen. When he started to work the mill he found the state of affairs was quite appalling. Little boys and girls were taken from the workhouse at the age of six, and were worked in the mill from six in the morning until seven in the evening. The result was that these poor children grew up in ignorance and vice, and that the conditions of life in the village were altogether bad. Owen set to work to alter this, not only in his own factory, but in other factories too; and he was soon joined by a number of noble-minded people, who forced the Government to interfere. We shall trace the results of their labours in a subsequent chapter.

But in his own mill Owen did not wait for the Government. He set to work to teach his work-people the advantages of orderliness, cleanliness, and thrift; lessened very considerably the hours of labour of the children who worked in his mill; and saw to it that in some of their spare time they were educated in a school attached to the factory and organised by himself. His factory school was one of the first successful infant schools in Great Britain; we cannot call it a day continuation school, for the children who attended it were not continuing their education, they were only at the beginning of it. His efforts for his workers attracted very much attention, and led the way to better conditions of factory life.

So far we have spoken only of work in the newly-established factories; the evils associated with the work of women and children were not confined to those establishments, but extended all through the industrial system of the country. In the coal-mines, for example, the conditions were in some cases even worse than in the textile mills. Women and girls were busily employed on many of the coal-fields (Durham is the exception) underground in the mines, hauling the trucks of coal from the coal face to the bottom of the shaft. To do this they were harnessed to the trolley by rope or chain, and spent most of the day in a bent or crouching posture as they hauled the trucks along the low and narrow workings, over a floor which might be ankle deep in mud or water; while owing to the heat of the air in the underground workings, they were in many cases only half clothed, and the chains or ropes by which they were harnessed to the trucks chafed and tore their flesh and covered it with sores.

In some cases, too, the coal, instead of being brought up to the surface in a cage by a winding engine as it is raised nowadays, had to be carried out of the pit in baskets. Women and children were often employed to perform this task. Imagine a girl with a basket strapped to her back containing perhaps a hundredweight of coal climbing up a series of ladders from the bottom of a pit three hundred or more feet deep, depositing her load at the top, and then descending for another load, and so on continuously day by day. That was one of the tasks which women and children then performed. Little boys and girls, too, of five years of age

worked in the mines as "trappers," that is, they sat all day long in the dark workings, in order to see that the ventilation doors of the roads were shut properly after anyone had passed through; and there is one instance, of a child of nine being employed as the worker of the engine by which the cage was drawn up the pit shaft. You may know also something of the sufferings of the boy chimney sweeps, who had to climb chimneys to the top and then descend them, sweeping the soot before them as they went. Tom in Kingsley's *Water Babies* was one of them; you will be surprised to know that in some cases girls also were used as little chimney sweeps.

The same evil conditions existed in brickfields and potteries and other branches of industry; and one of the worst results of this mixing of old and young workers at a time when the moral outlook of the people was much lower than it now is was that these little ones learned at a very early age many forms of vice and wrong-doing of which their more fortunate sisters were happily ignorant. It was some time before better conditions prevailed.

CHAPTER X

CHANGES IN COUNTRY LIFE

THE great change we have just described in the conditions of life and work of the people engaged in manufacturing industry was accompanied by another change, also almost a revolution in its character, which came over English farming at about the same time.

We saw in Chapter VI. that during the Tudor period there had been an alteration in the methods of farming in England, by which the old open-field method of land holding and land working had been changed for a system by which the land was enclosed and divided up into separate farms, each with its own owner or tenant. But this new system was only adopted in certain parts of the country, and probably not more than a quarter of the land was as yet enclosed in this way.

Between 1600 and 1750 there had been many very great improvements in English farming methods, especially in the districts where the new enclosed farms existed. A number of capable men had given their attention to the problem of making the land more productive, with the result that many valuable ideas had been introduced and put into practice, though agricultural workers are usually very cautious folk, slow to change and stubborn to retain the methods they have in use.

About 1730 a man in the West of England had invented and taught the advantage of using a horse-hoe so as to keep the soil well stirred around the crop, and had made a drill for sowing the seeds in rows so that this added cultivation could readily be done. Other men in Norfolk had found out the great advantage that came from using turnips; they gave plenty of winter food for the cattle, and the cattle gave manure back to the land. Others again were beginning to improve the breeds of cattle, sheep and pigs, so as to make them more profitable, especially from the point of view of food. Others were experimenting in the uses and values of different kinds of manures. In all these ways progress was being made.

But progress was only possible where the new method of enclosed fields was in use, and so once more there was a movement in this direction. Between 1700 and 1800 there were over 1600 Acts of Parliament for the enclosure of common fields in different parts of the country; there were over a thousand more in the first half of the nineteenth century. With this change came a very great change in village life, a change which had a great effect upon England. The old form of village society passed away; the new ways of rural life were introduced.

Before the change most of the villages contained quite a number of grades of society. There was in the first place the country squire, who was usually the lord of the manor. Addison has given us a picture of the best kind of country squire in his portrait of Sir Roger de Coverley, but many of the landowners and landlords of the eighteenth century

were new holders who had bought the land with the profits of their trading or manufacturing enterprises. This kind of landlord liked to taste of power and control as a country gentleman and justice of the peace, and if he invested his money in land expected as good a return from his investment as if he had invested it in trade. Consequently, such a landlord was very keen on introducing the new methods into his farming work.

Then there were the yeomanry and country freeholders, of whom we have already spoken, who had been for generations the backbone of the countryside. They held estates of varying size, and in many cases worked the land themselves with the help of their wives and children. The smallest of them had to hold a freehold worth at least forty shillings a year, and they were an independent race who formed an important section of country society next in importance to the country gentlefolk. In somewhat the same position were the copyholders, who held their land by virtue of their names appearing in the copy of the old manor-roll. In many cases they were the descendants of the villeins of the Middle Ages. Then came the tenant farmers, who held their land from the squire on a lease which might be of longer or shorter duration. Socially the tenant farmer ranked below the yeoman and freeholder, who could afford to be more independent, seeing that they were the owners of the land on which they lived. But many of the tenant farmers were prosperous and well-to-do, and they formed an important link in the chain of village society.

Then came the labourers, who might be perhaps

young farm servants living in the houses of the farmers for whom they worked; or villagers holding a little land with the right of feeding their cattle on the waste land, but without enough work of their own to occupy more than a portion of their time. They therefore went also to work in their spare time as labourers for the farmers around them; and their children usually did the same, as did their wives at harvest and other busy times. But it was usual for all these labourers to have some land of their own, and it was possible for the best of them to add to this land as time went on and improve their social position.

Most of these people suffered in the change. The yeomanry, of whom Macaulay estimated that there were something like 160,000 at the beginning of the eighteenth century, practically disappeared, many of them going into the towns and becoming manufacturers. Worse still was the fate of the smaller farmers and the cottagers, even where they received a piece of land in exchange for their rights on the common land. In many cases they were unable to take up this land, for a share of the legal charges and the cost of fencing the land had to be borne by them, and they were often unable to meet these charges. There were cases, too, where the land allotted to them was either of poor quality or else very inconveniently situated.

But even where a portion of land was retained, much was lost. The cottagers had been able to maintain themselves in fuel from the waste lands, peat-bogs, etc.; they had been able to cut down the bracken for bedding for cattle and pigs; they had

AN ENGLISH COTTAGE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

been able to feed their cattle and pigs on the common, and on the arable fields when the fences were taken down after the harvest had been gathered in. Now they had only their own small plots of land at most, and had lost all chance of rising socially from labourer to tenant farmer as was formerly the case. There had come into existence a large class of men dependent entirely upon their daily wage for a living, and only able to rise from the position of labourer with the greatest difficulty.

At the same time another important custom, which had become almost a right from its immemorial usage, the custom of gleaning after harvest, was taken away. Gleaning had been a usual occupation at harvest time for women and girls, but now that the fields were enclosed the farmers objected to the presence of gleaners there, and improved agricultural implements made the residue left for gleaning very small. An attempt was made in the courts of law to establish the right to glean as a customary right, but it failed, and gleaning was now a matter of favour and not of right, and was therefore only possible where the farmer did not object.

Add to this that the Industrial Revolution came at the same time and took away from the village those by-industries which the domestic system of industry had established there, and it will be seen that the lot of the average villager was a poor one. It was a period of rising prices, when wages were of much less *real* value than they had formerly been, and yet all these supplementary sources of income were taken away. All this resulted in a great change in village life. Now there was in each village a number of poor

labourers who found it difficult to maintain themselves, their wives and their children, and who were consequently too depressed to find much pleasure of any sort in life. The Puritans in the seventeenth century had done away with the happy Sunday afternoons on the village green, and had abolished Saints' days and other popular holidays. In most villages the old games and junketings and merry-makings of Merrie England disappeared, and the

MAY-DAY SPORTS IN THE VILLAGE
(The costumes are Elizabethan)

lack of variety in village life helped the exodus of the young able-bodied country folk into the newly developing industrial areas.

The closing years of the eighteenth century were very bad years indeed for the agricultural labourer. The tax on imported corn made the price of bread almost prohibitive; the new wave of land enclosure took away the common lands from them; the spread of the industrial revolution began to take from them the by-industries in which they and their families had engaged. Wages were still

fixed at prices which had taken these additional sources of income into account, and they tended to remain at the same level in spite of rising prices and the loss of other sources of food and money. In Gloucestershire at the close of the eighteenth century women spinners were earning about fourteen shillings a week with the jenny, after the introduction of the mule this fell to twelve shillings; in Bedfordshire the women lacemakers could earn six shillings a week and girls three shillings, while women straw plait workers could get from six to twelve shillings a week and children two to four shillings. The women knitters of the Midlands embroidered six pairs of hose a day for half-a-crown a week, the spinners of Oxfordshire worked a week for two to three shillings. In ordinary agricultural work women in Cumberland could earn fourpence to sixpence a day, which rose to tenpence during the corn harvest, while maidservants in farm-houses earned six pounds to eight pounds per year; in Kent the day rate was eightpence to tenpence; in the East Riding at harvest time men were paid twelve to fourteen shillings a week with food, women six to seven shillings with beer only added. Near London, at Ealing and Brentford, women got sixpence a journey for carrying heavy baskets of fruit to Covent Garden market, a distance of nine miles, and made two journeys a day. Food prices varied considerably in different parts of the country, but usual prices were: beef fourpence-halfpenny to fivepence-halfpenny a pound; mutton fivepence to fivepence-halfpenny; pork sixpence to sixpence-halfpenny; bacon ninepence to tenpence; butter tenpence to a shilling; milk was cheap where

it was obtainable. It is not surprising that William Cobbett, writing of the English agricultural labourers in 1816, says "they were as thin as herrings, dragging their feet after them, pale as a ceiling, and sneaking about like beggars." To make matters still worse, the old poor law system established by Elizabeth's Parliament in 1601 was breaking down. It had lasted well on the whole, with the help of certain alterations that had been made in the course of time, the chief of which were the granting to Justices of the Peace of the power of ordering poor relief to anyone they thought required it, the erection of workhouses in which persons might be lodged and compelled to work as a condition of receiving poor relief, and the formation of Boards of Guardians to superintend the actions of the Overseers of the poor.

Towards the end of the century additional powers of relief were given to the Justices, and the workhouse test was abolished at a time when the conditions under which the rural poor were living were very bad indeed. Some people were considering the advisability of trying to restore the old system of wage regulation which was still really the law of the land—it was not abolished until 1813—but in the meantime the Berkshire Justices at a meeting at Speenhamland decided not to do this, but to supplement wages by poor relief instead. They therefore fixed a scale of relief as an aid to wages, and made it depend upon the price of bread and the number of children in the family. The only excuse for such a system was the perilous condition of the country through the war with France; for this method simply encouraged idleness and took away from the farmers any incentive

towards raising wages. There was grave danger that all the workers might become paupers, with a loss of all self-effort and self-respect, and even that the cost of the poor rate might bring the country to the verge of bankruptcy. Yet no great change was made in the system until the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834.

What women's lives could be like in the country districts at the close of the eighteenth century can best be shown by two quotations from Eden's *State of the Poor*, a work published in 1797; the one deals with the life of a Cumberland woman, the other with that of a woman of Surrey.

The following is a statement of the earnings and expences of a woman aged sixty-one, and is an instance of Cumberland economy among many others that might be pointed out.

	£	s.	d.
She spins wool for her neighbours about 15 weeks a year, and earns 4d. a day and victuals	1	10	0
Remaining 37 weeks she spins lint at home for a manufacturer and earns 13½d. a week	2	1	7½
Total earnings	3	11	7½
Interest on £10 (invested)	0	10	0
	4	1	7½

Expences	£	s.	d.
House rent, 10s.; fuel (peat and turf) 7s.	0	17	0
Barley, 2½ bushels at 5s.	0	12	6
Oatmeal, 6 stone at 2s. 4d.	0	14	0
Butter, 8lbs. at 8d., 5s. 4d.; milk, 220 qts., 5s. 6½d.	0	10	10½
She gets 3 pecks of potatoes planted for her; her turf ashes produce about 9 bushels, balance of expence about	0	2	0
Tea not used; sugar and treacle	0	4	0
Salt, candles, soap, etc., etc.	0	4	0
Clogs (one pair in two years), 1s. 6d.; shoes (one pair in seven years), 6d.	0	2	0
Butchers' meat, 1s. 6d.; wheaten bread, 1s.	0	2	6
Shift, 2s. 9d.; other clothes, etc., 10s.	0	12	9
Total expences	4	1	7½

This woman's earnings are small, but she makes her expences correspond. She seems perfectly happy, content and cheerful, and always takes care to avoid debt. Her father rented a small farm of only £8 a year, and as he was very lame she was obliged to do the greatest part of the work. On his death she disposed of the stock, etc., and after discharging all his debts and funeral expences a surplus of £10 remained which she placed in the hands of her landlord; the interest of which pays her rent. When she was able to reap in harvest she earned a little more money, yet notwithstanding her present scanty income she has no thought of applying to the parish. She receives no assistance from her friends. Her common diet is hasty pudding, milk, butter, and potatoes. She was brought up in a most frugal manner, and feels no inconvenience from being obliged to live so abstemiously. She never had a teapot in her house at any period of her life.

So lived a woman of the North; the companion picture is of a woman of the South.

Anne Hurst was born at Witley in Surrey; there she lived the whole period of a long life, and there she died. As soon as she was thought able to work, she went to service; there, before she was twenty, she married James Strudwick, who, like her own father, was a day-labourer. With this husband she lived a prolific, hardworking, contented wife, somewhat more than fifty years. He worked more than three-score years on one farm; and his wages, summer and winter, were regularly a shilling a day. He never asked more; nor was ever offered less. They had between them seven children; and lived to see six daughters married, and three of them the mothers of sixteen children, all of whom were brought up, or are being brought up to be day-labourers. Strudwick continued to work till within seven weeks of the day of his death; and at the age of four-score, in 1787, he closed, in peace, a not inglorious life; for, to the day of his death, he never received a farthing in the way of parochial aid. His wife survived him about seven years, and though bent with age and infirmities, and little able to work, except as a weeder in a gentleman's garden, she also was too proud either to ask or

receive any relief from her parish. For six or seven of the last years of her life she received twenty shillings a year from the person who favoured me with this account, which he drew up from her own mouth. With all her virtue, and all her merit, she yet was not much liked in her neighbourhood; people in affluence thought her haughty; and the paupers of the parish, seeing, as they could not help seeing, that her life was a reproval to theirs, aggravated all her little failings. Yet, the worst thing they had to say of her was, that she was proud; which, they said, was manifested by the manner in which she buried her husband. Resolute, as she owned she was to have the funeral and everything that related to it what she called decent, nothing could dissuade her from having handles to his coffin, and a plate on it, mentioning his age. She was also charged with having behaved herself crossly and peevishly towards one of her sons-in-law, who was a mason; and went regularly every Saturday evening to the ale-house, as he said, *just to drink a pot of beer*. James Strudwick, in all his life, as she often told this ungracious son-in-law, never spent five shillings in any idleness; luckily (as she was sure to add) he had it not to spend. A more serious charge against her was that, living to a great age, and but little able to work, she grew to be seriously afraid that, at last, she might become chargeable to the parish (the heaviest, in her estimation, of all human calamities), and that thus alarmed, she did suffer herself more than once, during the exacerbations of a fit of distempered despondency, peevishly (and perhaps petulantly), to exclaim that God Almighty, by suffering her to remain so long upon earth, seemed actually to have forgotten her.

Descriptions such as these may well be left to speak for themselves.

Even when improvements began to take place in many branches of industry, they were very slow to arrive in agriculture, where the conditions of labour were often enough very bad, and wages remained very low especially in the rural counties where the

workers could not benefit by the competition for workers in the towns. In some districts, especially in the South of England, parish children were apprenticed to farmers and were badly treated by them. Much work was done also by women and children working together in gangs under the control of a gang-master, who made the contracts with the farmers and paid the members of the gang himself. These gangs worked very hard for very low wages, and the conditions under which they were housed in barns and hovels when on their rounds were often very bad indeed. An Act of Parliament in 1867 forbade the employment of children under eight in gangs in which men also worked, it also insisted on gang-masters being licensed by Justices of the Peace in petty sessions, and on each gang of women and girls being accompanied by a properly licensed gang-mistress. Later on the enforcement of compulsory education took away some child labour from the fields. There is always much work in agriculture that can be performed by women and girls: weeding, stone picking, potato setting and potato picking, singling and weeding turnips, and so on. About the middle of the nineteenth century a woman could earn for such labour from eightpence to tenpence, a girl about sixpence, and a boy of sixteen or seventeen about tenpence a day. Matters have improved considerably since then, but even now the problem of village life and of English agriculture remains a difficult one to solve successfully.

CHAPTER XI

DEVELOPMENT OF THE FACTORY SYSTEM

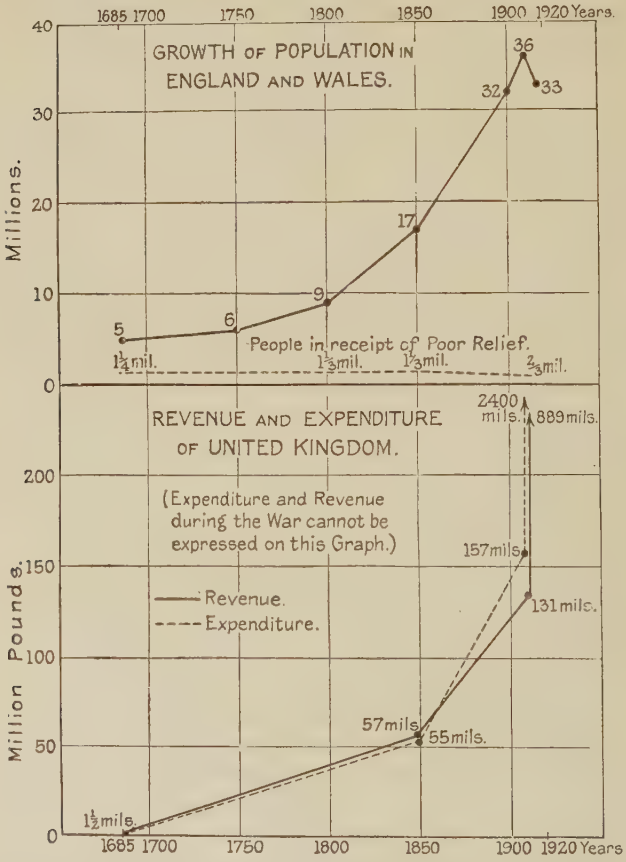
It was a great pity that the spread of industry should have come at a time when Britain was fighting for commercial superiority over the French. In the struggle for victory over Napoleon, many of whose measures were designed to recover for France that industrial supremacy which she had enjoyed during the eighteenth century, but had lost, for the time being, in the disorders and tumults of the years of revolution, many things were permitted in English industries, and women and children endured many hardships which might possibly never have arisen or could have been prevented in times of peace and quietness.

The French Revolution, too, was responsible for some of the neglect of the welfare of the workers at this time, through its teaching of liberty, equality and fraternity. This teaching was really part of a very popular and widespread desire to throw off the restraints in government and commerce which had been hampering their development during the eighteenth century. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats, and the other writers of what we often call the Romantic Revival in English literature at the beginning of the nineteenth century, show this desire in English literature; there was a similar feeling in trade and industry, where it was felt that

the less these were bound down by rule and formula, and the less they were interfered with by the Government, the greater the progress they would make and the better the result would be. A professor of Glasgow University named Adam Smith, in his book, *The Wealth of Nations*, published 1776, had taught that State interference was bad and tended to prevent progress; he supported a policy of non-interference, of as much freedom as possible in commercial and industrial affairs, of the removal of State aids, State restrictions, State interferences—a policy of *laissez faire*, as it is usually called; and it was generally assumed that the same policy of non-interference would give the best results in the bargains entered into between employers and employed. This is obviously very different from the ideas of the earlier centuries, when attempts had been made by Statutes of Labourers to fix rates of wages for workers in town and country, and to limit the occupations to which young persons could be apprenticed.

As a matter of fact this new method did not result in good bargains being made; the worker suffered and the employer gained very considerably in such bargaining. There were many reasons for this; the workers were poor men or women who would have found it very difficult in those days to leave the place in which they were living, there were no trade unions or other effective combinations of workers to look after their own interests. The great demand for manufactured goods on the Continent, the shortage of workers, for the country at this time was but thinly populated as compared with the present time (it is estimated that the total population of

England and Wales in 1810 was only ten millions and of Scotland less than two millions), the need of



money to pay the subsidies to continental Powers by which Pitt hoped to beat the French, the high taxation due to the war, the great debt with which

the nation was saddled when the war was over—all these things tended to prevent the Government from making any improvements. With the peace, matters became worse rather than better; there was trade depression and unemployment, for the continental nations were too poor to be able to buy goods; and when trade did improve, their own industrial revolutions commenced, and they soon began to compete with England in trade; while the Government was afraid to make any reforms or allow any rights of combination to the workers lest the result should be revolution. The ten years after Waterloo were thus years of reaction in government. Until the passing of the Reform Act of 1832 the power was mainly in the hands of the landowners, and they tried to maintain the tax on imported corn, which kept up the price of bread by preventing the importation of corn from abroad until corn produced at home was selling for eighty shillings a quarter.

The high cost of living combined with a very low rate of wages naturally led to very much discontent and agitation, and it is noteworthy that at this time the minds of the people were set very largely upon Parliamentary reform as the panacea for all their ills. Hence the passing of the famous Reform Act of 1832, which, however little it may have fulfilled the expectations of the people who worked and even rioted for it, does mark the beginning of a progressive betterment in the lives of the workers of the country. Long before 1832, indeed, the conditions under which women, boys and girls were being forced to labour in the textile factories had led to State interference in order to better the conditions under which

they worked. The first step had been taken in 1802, when an Act of Parliament restricted the hours of labour of the poor pauper apprentices to twelve a day, forbade their working at night, and made provision for better workshops and sleeping-places and for some education for them. In spite of all *laissez-faire* doctrines the State was bound to interfere here, for it was the responsible guardian of these helpless girls and boys and could not rid itself of its responsibility.

This interference was the beginning of a succession of Acts of Parliament which bit by bit improved the conditions under which people worked. It was first extended from pauper apprentices to cover all children in textile factories; then it brought in young persons and women, and finally it reached men also. Many persons laboured earnestly to bring about the change, among them were Richard Oastler, a Yorkshire land agent; John Fielden, a Radical cotton manufacturer, who believed that with lessened hours of work prices would rise; John Doherty, a trade-union secretary; the Rev. G. S. Bull, Vicar of Bradford; the Rev. J. R. Stevens, a Wesleyan minister; M. T. Sadler, a Yorkshire manufacturer; and after 1832 Lord Ashley, Earl of Shaftesbury, whose efforts deserve the highest praise. Writers also helped in the good work. Carlyle denounced the ideas of the *laissez-faire* economists and their followers. Ruskin followed Carlyle; Dickens gives us some very vivid pictures of life in the factory towns in his *Hard Times* with its Mr. Gradgrind, and Mrs. Gaskell shows similar pictures in her *Mary Barton* and her *North and South*; at a later date Tom Hood called

attention to sweated workers in home industries in his well-known *Song of the Shirt*, and Mrs. Browning poured out all a woman's sympathy in her pathetic *Cry of the Children*:

For, all day, the wheels are droning, turning,—
Their wind comes in our faces,—
Till our hearts turn,—our heads, with pulses burning,
And the walls turn in their places—
Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling;
Turns the long light that droppeth down the wall;
Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling—
All are turning, all the day, and we with all.
And, all day, the iron wheels are droning;
And sometimes we could pray,
"O ye wheels" (breaking out in a mad moaning),
"Stop, be silent for to-day."

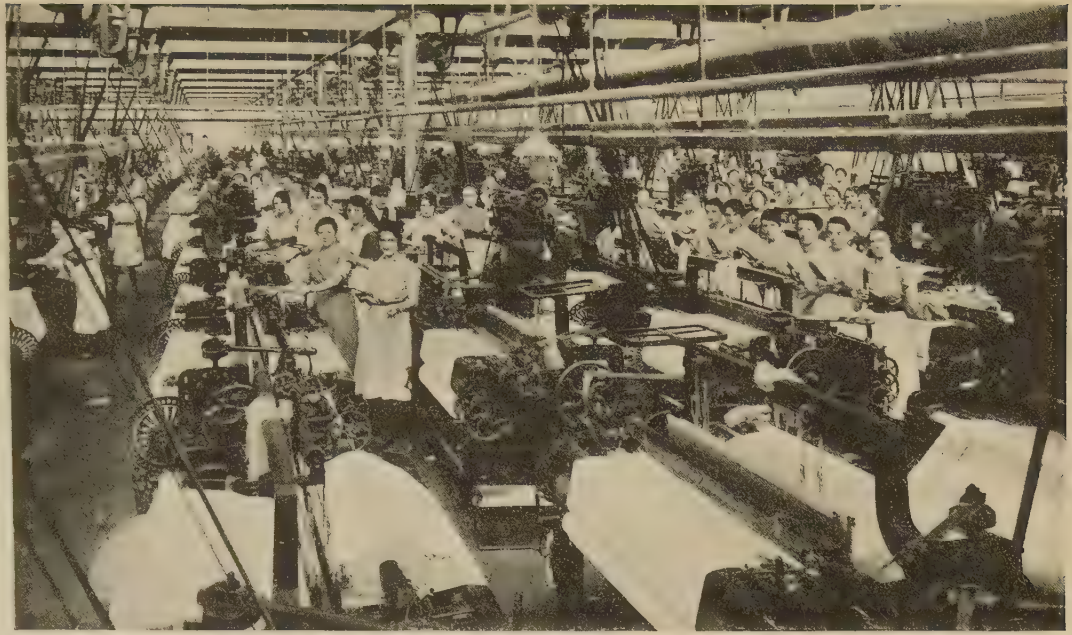
. . . . . .

They look up, with their pale and sunken faces,
And their look is dread to see,
For they mind you of the angels in their places,
With eyes meant for Deity:—
"How long," they say, "how long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand to move the world on a child's heart,—
Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?
Our blood splashes upward, O our tyrants,
And your purple shows your path;
But the child's sob curseth deeper in the silence
Than the strong man in his wrath!"

All these efforts helped to influence public opinion, and through it Parliament. One of the most important of the Acts of Parliament was the Althorp Act of 1833, which restricted the hours of labour of children from nine to thirteen years of age to forty-eight weekly (children under nine had been prevented from entering textile factories in 1819), and of young persons of thirteen to eighteen to

sixty-eight weekly; it also prohibited night work for all of them. Better still, it appointed factory inspectors to see that the provisions of the Act were really carried out; there had been inspecting visitors in preceding Acts, in the shape of the justices of the peace and clergy of the district in which the factory was situated, but they had not proved a success. By 1850 no woman or child could work except between 6 A.M. and 6 P.M. in summer and 7 A.M. and 7 P.M. in winter, with no Saturday work after 2 P.M.

Since 1850 improvement has been almost continuous; and the better conditions have been extended to other occupations, which needed them quite as much as, if not more than, the textile industries. For in every industry in which women and children were employed State interference proved necessary. The conditions of work in the brickfields, tile works, pot banks and other places were all equally bad; we have spoken of the work of women and girls in the coal-mines, a condition of things which was unchanged until an Act of Parliament in 1842 prohibited their employment underground; Kingsley's *Water Babies* tells us something of the little chimney sweepers' boys, as does his *Alton Locke* of the sweated tailors. All these and other industries had to be brought within the scope of the earlier Acts associated with the textile factories. It was necessary, too, to abolish *truck*, which has been mentioned as prevalent some centuries before—the system of compelling the workers to take their wages in whole or part in the form of groceries and other materials sold in shops owned by the master or their friends or tenants.



AT WORK IN A COTTON WEAVING SHED

There were cases where this method had been in some measure a blessing to many wives, for it did assure that wages were spent in food and other necessaries which might otherwise have been spent in drink; but the materials supplied were usually inferior in quality and exorbitant in price, while they might also be materials which the housewife could do without altogether, or only required in smaller quantities.

New regulations for fencing in the machines also saved the workers from injury or death; and employers were made responsible for the proper ventilation, sanitation, and cleanliness of the workshops, and for the care of their workpeople. Since 1893 there have been women factory inspectors with very happy results.

As a result of these improvements work in the factory proved ultimately to be much healthier and happier than work carried on in the home. Under the domestic system girls had been forced by their parents to work for very long hours; in the factory the hours of work were shorter, and there was freedom from work and its associations when those hours were over; the lighting, ventilation and sanitation of the homes often left very much to be desired, all the work was done in one small room, and food and drink also were usually taken in the same apartment; there were many cases where the workroom was used also for sleeping purposes. All this meant that work in the homes was done without much care and cleanliness; where girls went from the home to the factory and could get home for their meals, there was change of air and exercise for them;

where they had to take food to the works there was no improvement at first, but as time went on dining rooms were introduced and conditions improved. The first factories were in most cases ill-adapted for the work to be done in them, any old house or barn that could be used was converted to the purpose, but modern factories are specially built for the work that is to be done in them, and have to fulfil the requirements of the Acts of Parliament we have spoken of. They are therefore likely to be very much better for work purposes than the homes can be. Men and women, too, are essentially social animals; and girls like better to work in groups with their companions than in solitude at home, just as they prefer the fixed hours of labour of the factory to the indeterminate hours of work in the house. Both these things have been factors in lessening the number of girls willing to take up domestic service as their occupation. In one way, at any rate, the factory system has worked harm; with the machine there is a greater and greater division of labour, and very much of the work requires little or no special skill. In the old days of the domestic industry boys and girls had opportunities of learning all branches of the work and became more highly skilled workers in consequence.

Probably the greatest change of all has been that the old system of family wage has disappeared; girls have become more independent of the family at an earlier age, though they are still closely associated with the domestic work of the home, and are not so independent as their brothers of the same age. It does not follow that this independence is of

necessity an advantage; and it has to be remembered that the employment of young persons may lead to the loss of work by older people. On the other hand, the knowledge of a trade and the existence of facilities for exercising it have rendered girls more independent of marriage, and this has been a factor in causing the age of marriage to rise considerably above what it was a couple of centuries ago. No doubt, too, the absence of by-occupations has acted in the same direction, as in many cases the man has become the wage-earner of the family, whereas we saw that under the system of domestic industry all or nearly all the members of the family contributed something to the family income. The areas with common rights in agriculture were usually areas of early marriages, for the wife, with her care of the stock and her harvest earnings, brought in a good portion of the income. It is said that in the earlier days of the Industrial Revolution the women who either from knowledge of industrial work or from superior physique were best as workers were the women who were usually sought in marriage. A few figures taken from the reports of the inspectors of factories will show how busy women and girls were in the factories. In 1835 there were in all 238 silk factories in the British Isles, employing about 31,000 persons, of whom over 20,000 were women and girls. There were 3925 girls at work between the ages of eight and twelve. In 1850 there were 347 linen factories in the British Isles, employing over 33,000 persons, and of these the women and girls numbered 22,888, of whom about half were under eighteen, over 2000 were between twelve and thirteen, and

about 600 from nine to twelve years of age. The early power-loom weavers had been largely women

AT WORK IN A WOOLLEN MILL

and children, but generally speaking the introduction of steam power meant the use of larger machines, which women and children were incapable of

managing; and men began to take over the large and heavy machines from them, and so returned to their places in the textile industries.

The factory system, too, has brought great advantages to employers of labour. One trouble under the domestic system was the loss of material which sometimes occurred, and this has of course been removed; supervision in the factory means steady work while the workers are on their shift, and more and better work has been done in consequence; while employers have found that improved conditions of work are well repaid by the better results obtained.

But by 1830 the European States were recovering from the losses of the Napoleonic wars, and Britain began to feel the effect of foreign competition to a much greater extent than she had formerly done. First France, then the United States, and, after the Franco-Prussian war, Germany made great strides forward in industry and commerce; since then Japan also has developed strongly as an industrial country. British workers and British money helped very considerably in the development of most of these countries; many railways were built abroad by British labourers and financed by British money; and after 1843 the export of British machinery was permitted anywhere. One result of this increased competition, especially after Germany had entered the industrial field, was the necessity of improving both the processes of manufacture and also the conditions under which the work was carried on. Science was invoked to help in these problems and great improvements resulted, which have had a

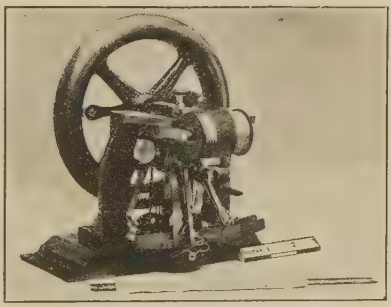
marked effect upon present conditions of labour in workshops and factories.

These improvements may be traced in part in the many Acts of Parliament which affect the lives of workers very closely to-day; for the days of *laissez-faire* in this matter have passed away, and State interference is the order of the day. Employers have been made responsible for compensation to their workers for injuries incurred in the pursuit of their employment; efforts have been made to deal with the problem of unemployment, one of the greatest difficulties of modern industry. The first attempts to deal with this question took the form of the organisation of relief work for persons out of work; labour exchanges were instituted in 1909 to bring together employers and persons out of work; in 1911 a system of compulsory insurance against unemployment was established on the lines of a similar State scheme in Germany. But these are only palliatives, and up to the present no preventative of unemployment has been discovered. This State insurance was also made to cover the question of national health by a system which gives allowances and medicine to workers who are ill, maternity benefits, and so on, in return for contributions made by them and added to by the employers and the State; it has tried also to check the scourge of consumption by the establishment of sanatoria for the special treatment of consumptives. In 1908 a system of old age pensions was also established. There are now over three million women insured under these Insurance Acts. The right to combine in trade unions has been granted to the workers,

and women began to combine in unions after 1871, and it is also possible for the Board of Trade to interfere under certain circumstances in strikes and other trade disputes. Special provisions have been made for the protection of persons engaged in unhealthy and dangerous occupations; Trade Boards have been established (1909) to fix a minimum wage for workers in certain badly-paid industries which often employ many women and girls, and are frequently industries of the domestic type. They include such trades as chain-making; making paper, cardboard, or chip boxes or parts of boxes; machine-made lace and net finishing and mending or darning operations; ready-made and wholesale bespoke tailoring; dressmaking; shirtmaking; food-preserving; the various confectionery processes; and work in embroidery. The duty of the Board is to fix a minimum rate of wages for rate work or piece-work in the industry concerned, and seventy per cent. of the workers whose wages were improved in 1909 by the Trade Boards Act were women. Children have been catered for by attempts to prevent or restrict their employment out of school hours in various kinds of street trading, and to prevent their remaining in blind-alley occupations; care committees have been instituted in connection with the schools to watch over the future careers of girls and boys. Little children are also catered for by the provision of health visitors and municipal milk depots.

Attempts have been made to induce the workers in the country to remain there by affording facilities for small holdings and allotments. One of the most marked features of the second half of the nineteenth

century was the continued exodus of people from the country to the town. Between 1851 and 1861 three-quarters of the total increase of population was in the towns; the strongest and most vigorous of the young country population was moving into the towns and finding work there, often at the expense of the townsmen proper. Girls especially were entering the shops and offices, or acting as domestic servants. At the beginning of the century the wages of women and girls had declined, but since 1850 there has been steady progress in the upward direction.



HOWE'S SEWING MACHINE

All these things help us to realise that the Industrial Revolution continued throughout the nineteenth century, and is not completed yet. The machine has invaded almost all industries — wood-working of all kinds, iron-working, flour-milling, printing, laundry work. Probably the most important of all the inventions of the nineteenth century has been that of the sewing machine, which was invented in 1845 by an American named Elias Howe, who first conceived the idea of such a machine through observing the weary labour of his wife as a seamstress. The machine has been improved considerably since its introduction, and its use has worked a revolution in many important industries. Sewing has always been

one of the commonest forms of labour in which women and girls have engaged; the machine increased the number of those who could undertake the work by making skill with the needle no longer necessary in many branches of industry connected with sewing. In the twenty years following its invention about 40,000 additional women became workers in such occupations. The sewing machine is now to be found in almost every home; in the factories it is driven by various forms of power; its use has revolutionised the methods of production of clothing, boots and shoes, gloves, hats, corsets, and other articles of common use. Different types of power, too, have been developed, and in many cases steam has been abandoned, for gas, oil, and electricity are proving cleaner and more economical than steam, and they can also be used upon a smaller scale.

As a result of all this the home life of the towns has changed very considerably. The production of articles of household use, which occupied so much of the time of the women of the mediæval household, has now gone out of the house almost completely. The manufacture of bread, beer, biscuits, confectionery of all kinds, jams, preserves, pickles, all kinds of clothing, laundry work, and to some extent the repair of garments, has gone from the home to the workshops, and is responsible for the employment of a large number of girls. Generally speaking, home production remains in the country districts after it has been abandoned in the towns; it lasts longer, too, in the north of England than in the south. But home production tends to lessen everywhere, even in the

remotest villages, for now the shops are everywhere at hand, and the distribution of these articles again forms an occupation calling for the services of many girls and women.

Women and girls, therefore, now form a large part of England's army of workers; according to the census of 1911, there were 14,857,113 women and girls over ten years of age in England and Wales, and of these 4,830,734 were returned as engaged in occupations other than the management of the home. Of these it is interesting to notice that 3,739,532 were unmarried and 411,011 widowed persons.

Occupations in which men and women are employed indifferently are few in number; the general tendency is for women to enter new occupations or occupations from which men are moving out to other more highly-skilled or better paid industries. Where men and women are both engaged in the same trade, as in the textile industries, printing and book production, etc., the men and women are usually to be found working separately in different branches of the work. It is usual, therefore, to find them separated into two non-competing groups so far as wages are concerned, though the margin between the two groups is constantly changing as women take over work formerly considered to be within the men's province, and, more rarely, *vice versâ*. The reason for this separation is, no doubt, the fear of the men that if the same operation were performed by both sexes, there would be a lowering in the rate of payment, for women, from various causes, seem willing to accept a lower standard of comfort than

men, and are therefore willing to put up with lower wages; in many cases, too, they have no family to support, or they may even have their wages eked out by home support; though it is sometimes too readily assumed that women workers have no dependants, but have only themselves to keep.

The wages paid to women and girls have always tended to remain very low. A Board of Trade return in 1886 shows that in the metal trades the average weekly earnings of women were twelve shillings and twopence, falling in the chain trade as low as seven-and-sixpence, the average for girls being seven-and-twopence, for lads and boys ten-and-sevenpence, and for men thirty-two-and-threepence. In the cycle and motor trade in 1914 women and young persons were getting thirteen-and-threepence weekly, and men thirty-three-and-tenpence; in the small-ware trades women were receiving ten shillings to twelve shillings a week; in textiles in 1906 the average wage in all trades was fifteen-and-fivepence, with linen as the worst paid of all; in hosiery the average woman's weekly wage before the war was about twenty-three shillings, the average man's forty shillings. In the various departments of the clothing trades, including cleaning, laundry work, etc., men were earning in 1906 thirty-and-twopence, lads and boys nine-and-eightpence, women thirteen-and-sixpence, and girls five-and-ninepence per week; in laundries alone the average weekly wage of women working full time was twelve-and-sixpence. It is unnecessary to give additional examples.

The worst paid industries are those associated with work which still remains in the stage of domestic

AT WORK IN THE FACTORY WHERE THIS BOOK WAS PRODUCED

industry, and there are many reasons for this. It is usually work which is irregular in amount, and for the most part it demands only unskilled labour. Thus it is often undertaken by persons who are either too old or too slow for factory work, and the poverty of the workers leads them to undercut one another with disastrous results. Moreover, the workers do not meet together and talk over their grievances as factory workers do, and so they are quite unorganised and helpless.

In home industries the majority of the workers are married women or widows; these industries include carding hooks and eyes, safety pins or buttons, filling stationery packets, paper box-making, washing and charing. A return of 658,788 women in trades where both home and factory labour was used showed that among home workers 59.5 per cent. were married; while of the total number of married women in these occupations 61.6 per cent. were engaged in home work, the proportion of single women so engaged being only 29.8 per cent. Laundry work especially engages a high proportion of married women.

There are many occupations in which the women employed considerably outnumber the men. Some of these are obvious, such as domestic service, laundry work, nursing, dressmaking, millinery, lodging- and boarding-house keeping, telegraphy and telephony, and teaching; less obvious ones include tailoring, cardboard box making, paper bag making, the stationery trades, bookbinding, thread making, certain branches of the textile industries, the tobacco trades, preserve, sweet, and jam making, cartridge, firework, and match making, lace making, strawplait

work, the making of pins and needles, and other branches of the smallware industry.

It is obvious that from the time of the Industrial Revolution onward a very large number of women and girls have been sharers in the great developments in trade and industry which have resulted from it. But perhaps the simplest way of making clear the share which women and girls were taking in industry and trade at the commencement of the war will be to take the figures given in a Board of Trade Return.

NUMBER OF WOMEN WORKING, JULY 1914

On their own account as employers	430,000
In industry	2,178,600
In domestic service	1,658,000
In commerce, etc.	505,500
In National and Local Government, including Education	262,200
In agriculture	190,000
In employment of hotels, public-houses, theatres, etc.	181,000
In others, including professional, employment and as home workers	560,700
In occupations	5,966,000
Not in occupations, but over ten	12,946,000
Under ten	4,809,000
Total females	23,721,000

CHAPTER XII

DEVELOPMENTS OF TRADE AND COMMERCE

THE industrial developments we have just described were necessarily accompanied by equally important and striking developments in trade and commerce. The goods produced were produced because there were markets, actual or potential, for them; it was the existence and development of these markets in different parts of the world that had made large scale production possible. The European countries became better customers to Britain when they had recovered from the effects of the Napoleonic wars; British people were also emigrating in large numbers to the United States and the Colonies, and in these countries new markets were opening up; food and raw material of industry were being sent to Britain, and manufactured goods sent out in exchange. As railways were extended across the continents, and great improvements in transport took place, the nations of the world became more closely connected than even the nations of Europe had been in the preceding centuries.

In order to cope with this increasing trade a revolution was necessary in commercial methods. To begin with, money capital became increasingly important. For now more frequent and larger commercial ventures were taking goods to the remoter parts of the earth, and it was some time before the manu-

facturer or merchant could hope to get a return for the money invested in the voyage; the building of canals, railways, ships, machinery, and factories all involved the investment of money for some time before a return could be hoped for from the investment; and credit, and often long credit, became an integral part of business. This meant that banking, already well-developed in Britain as compared with the Continent at the beginning of the nineteenth century, now made very rapid extensions, especially after 1826, when the monopoly of joint-stock banking enjoyed by the Bank of England since its foundation in 1694 was taken away from it, and many joint-stock banks came into existence. It had been money lent by Messrs. Child's Bank which had made the building of the Bridgewater Canal possible; now bankers were constantly financing new industries, or extensions of existing ones, all over the country; and to help in this connection the legal enactments which hindered the free lending of money were removed.

As time went on the older one-man and family businesses which had been usual in the early days of the Industrial Revolution gave place to partnerships, and finally to joint-stock companies. Money was accumulating and was becoming more widely spread in the community, and people were anxious to invest it, often foolishly enough, for there were financial crises at intervals. Alterations in the law made it easier for people to form companies for industrial and trading purposes and in 1855 joint-stock companies with limited liability were permitted in which, in the event of the failure of the companies, the

shareholders were no longer held responsible to a greater extent than the value of the shares they had taken up, and their private property could not therefore, be touched. The formation of such companies tended to change completely the old-time relation between employer and employed, which in the earlier one-man businesses had been of a personal nature, the master knowing his work-people and being known by them. The tendency nowadays is for these companies to unite in still larger companies, or to form trusts and combines, international and world-wide in the scope of their operations. The work of these companies formed a good field for the training of business persons of all types; and thanks to the fifty or so years' lead which Britain had in the Industrial Revolution, London became the great financial centre of the world, its banking centre and the headquarters for all operations connected with the exchange and discounting of bills. Insurance, too, had become of the greatest importance, and here also London took the lead.

New methods of dealing with commercial products also proved necessary as business extended, and the new scientific discoveries were adapted to business purposes. Improved methods of loading and unloading and otherwise handling goods were introduced. The telegraph was first used publicly in 1838 and the telephone in 1876, while the first submarine cable was laid successfully in 1850; all these made local fluctuations of market prices less and less possible, for the price of goods on the bourses and exchanges of the world could now be made known

daily, and even hourly, in the principal markets of the world, and their fluctuations noted. Postal facilities were greatly extended after the introduction of the penny post in 1840; money orders, postal orders, parcel-post facilities were added as the century went on, and all these things helped in commercial development.

A revolution was also necessary in the ordinary routine of business life. The rapid developments in printing and in paper production; the invention in 1857 of the typewriter, like the sewing machine one of the most wonderful productions of the age of invention; calculators and other instruments; the various copying methods; different kinds of inks; all these things have helped to revolutionise business methods, and training for commercial work has become an important branch of technical education. One of the most conspicuous results of these changes has been the entrance of girls in very large numbers into the world of business. Telegraph and telephone operations are very largely in their hands; they are to be found as workers of all grades in all kinds of insurance and business houses; and very much commercial and secretarial work is in their hands. We cannot imagine girls at work in the offices of the London of Dickens's novels; the business houses of Scrooge, or the brothers Cheeryble, or Dombey and Son could never have contained them; to-day they are a usual and a necessary part of British commercial operations. It is impossible, indeed, to specify all the various kinds of business operations in which they are engaged; but we may take some figures from the censuses of 1911 and the

preceding years to show where they are at work and how their numbers have increased:

	Proportion of women employed to every thousand men.					
	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911
Commercial or business clerks	5	16	33	72	153	326
Telegraph and telephone .	82	76	236	291	406	1438

The number of women occupied in various branches of commerce is now very great indeed; in 1914, at the outbreak of war, it exceeded 500,000, with an additional 120,000 acting as commercial or business clerks, 200 or more as saleswomen or buyers, and between 600 and 700 as commercial travellers. Over 4000 were serving in different departments of insurance offices, and more than 600 as insurance agents; while there were, according to the census of 1911, 42 merchants, 2727 brokers, agents or factors, 19 accountants, 231 auctioneers, house-agents and valuers, 418 officers of commercial guilds, societies, etc., 476 bankers, officials and clerks, and 387 brokers and bill discounters.

Large numbers of women and girls were also employed in national and local government offices; of these 206 were equivalent to men second-division clerks, 8 acting as supervisors or superintendents, 12 as principals, 26 as first-class and 168 as second-class clerks, their duties being chiefly in connection with national health insurance. In addition there were about 800 women typists and shorthand writers, while in the Post Office the number of women and girls employed was as follows:

Telephonists	11,723
Sorters and telegraphists. . .	7,560
Clerks	3,234
Counter Clerks	1,053

AT WORK IN A TELEPHONE EXCHANGE

The returns of women engaged in local government work in England and Wales by the census of 1911 give 17,831 women in poor law service, and 1606 in municipal and other offices. In 1841 there were only 2438 women employed in general or local government in the country out of a population of over eight million women; in 1881 the number per million women was 1312, and in 1901 it had risen as high as 2009.

Woman's work, too, has continued and expanded in all the processes of distribution of goods, in which, as we have seen, woman's share has been an important one since the earliest days of England's trade. In all kinds of wholesale and retail trade, in shop and store, women and girls are to be found at work; more than one quarter of the total number of women workers in commercial occupations in 1914 were employed as shop assistants or business clerks; between 1881 and 1911 the number of women employed as commercial clerks multiplied twenty-fold.

In commerce too, as elsewhere, the war caused a great increase in the number of women employed, the figures rising from 505,500 in July 1914 to 934,500 in July 1918.

Nor must we forget the large number of women who are working on their own account as makers, dealers, or employers, for in 1914 this number was as high as 430,000. A very large proportion were shopkeepers of various kinds, or pawnbrokers, or traders and hawkers. Women greatly outnumbered men (as might be expected) as the keepers of lodging

and boarding houses, while about forty per cent. of the beersellers, inn- and hotel-keepers were also women. All these figures, too, leave out of account the women who, as wives or widows or maiden ladies, are engaged in carrying on the work of the home.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SPREAD OF EDUCATION: WOMEN ENTER THE PROFESSIONS

Of all the many striking changes that marked the nineteenth century, none perhaps was more remarkable than the introduction and spread of popular education. The ignorance of the great masses of the people at the end of the eighteenth century is almost inconceivable to us. The developing industries had collected together thousands of people in the new industrial areas; but no provision was made for their intellectual, moral, or spiritual well-being until John Wesley, George Whitefield and other enthusiasts began to work and preach among them, and showed by the extraordinary success that attended their efforts how necessary their work was.

Their efforts were continued by many other philanthropists. John Howard and Elizabeth Fry caused reforms in the prisons; Hannah More worked among the poor of the Mendips; Robert Raikes of Gloucester founded a Sunday school there in 1781 with beneficial results; John Pounds, a shoemaker of Portsmouth, began to teach ragged children the rudiments of education. Their work was taken up by the various religious bodies, and Sunday and day schools were opened, which were an improvement on the dame-schools of which we have previously spoken. In these early Sunday schools

reading, spelling and writing were taught as well as the Scriptures and the Catechism; the first day schools taught the children simple exercises in reading, writing and arithmetic. As a result of these attempts to educate the poorer children of the nation two important educational societies were established: one, the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, owed very much to the direction of a clergyman named Dr. Bell, who had worked in India; the other, the British and Foreign School Society, was due to the efforts of a Southwark Quaker named Joseph Lancaster. Both used a method termed the monitorial system; in it the lesson was first taught to a number of boys and girls, who came into school half an hour before the others for this purpose, and then became the teachers of groups of other children. The work of these societies depended almost entirely on voluntary subscriptions, and it prospered exceedingly, so far as it could go.

While these societies were thus striving to give to poor children the elements of education, interest was also being aroused in the subject in a totally different direction; for as soon as inquiries began to be instituted into the work of the little children in the textile factories, the question of their ignorance was sure to crop up. We have noticed already that the Factory Act of 1802, which was the first attempt to improve the lot of the poor pauper apprentices working in textile factories, insisted on their receiving some education; and that at New Lanark a philanthropic millowner, named Robert Owen, had made provision for the education of the little children

associated with his mills by establishing for them an infant school, one of the first of its kind. So matters went on for some years until the Factory Act of 1833 brought things somewhat to a crisis, for it compelled all children under nine to cease from work in the textile factories, and shortened the hours of labour of the older ones. Some of the children thus freed were absorbed in occupations outside the scope of the Act, but many of them were left to run about the streets. The work done in the Sunday and day schools of the churches and societies had proved the value of education to the children, but the societies were hampered by lack of funds, and now in 1833 the Government came to their aid with a grant of £33,000 to be employed in building additional schools. There was now an opportunity for very many children to receive an elementary education, and soon a half-time system was established in the textile areas by which the children worked half a day in the factories and spent half a day in the schools, a system which has only recently been abolished. As time went on education became more and more a subject for State help, and therefore for State control. Grants were increased; steps were taken to train sufficient and efficient teachers for the work of the schools; inspectors were appointed to see that schools receiving the Government grants were efficiently conducted; additions were made to the curriculum as time went on.

In 1870 the increases in population, the dangers to the community arising from ignorance, the extension of the franchise to the working classes, and the growing demand for educational facilities,

made it necessary for the Government to supplement the work of the voluntary societies, which they had been aiding by money grants, by the establishment of a national system of education. At least one million out of about five and a half million children of school age were getting no education at all; most of those attending school left before they were twelve. A new Education Act was therefore passed which gave any area the power of establishing a directly elected School Board, which could build and control schools by means of an education rate levied directly for that purpose. This Act resulted in great extensions of elementary education. It was followed a few years later by an Act making it compulsory for parents to see that their children received efficient instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic. This was succeeded by an Act enforcing the attendance of all children at school for a certain minimum number of times per year. Up to this time a small fee had usually been charged for each child in attendance at school, but now that elementary education had become compulsory, the next step was to make it free, and this was done.

Great extensions have followed from these beginnings. The age of leaving school has risen steadily; methods of teaching have improved; the curriculum has been much extended and amended; physical training has been added; games are now a feature of very many schools; in 1905 an Act of Parliament made it possible to provide meals for necessitous children; more recently medical inspection of school children has been added and attention paid to the

general health and physique of the scholars. Open-air schools are also doing good work in this direction. An Act of Parliament in 1902 abolished the School Boards, and transferred their duties to the town and county councils, and made provision for the further instruction of the children attending elementary schools either in central or higher elementary schools, or in secondary schools, many of which were either founded or improved by the provisions of the Act. In 1918 a further Act, whose operations are at present suspended, made provision for the part-time education in new day continuation schools of those children who are not transferred to these higher schools. Education in evening schools has also grown considerably, and forms a means of continued education for all boys and girls who wish to take advantage of the opportunity thus offered.

One of the happiest results of these educational developments has been that the number of young children engaged in some form of industry has steadily decreased. The following table speaks for itself:

Proportional Percentage of Children aged 10 to 15 occupied

Year	Boys	Girls
1851	36.6	19.9
1861	36.9	20.2
1871	32.1	20.4
1881	22.9	15.1
1891	26.0	15.3
1901	21.9	12.0
1911	18.3	10.4

In 1901 the number of girls under fifteen employed

was 200,534; in 1911 the number had fallen to 182,493. A report on the employment of school children issued in 1901 gave shop work and domestic work as the two occupations in which these young girls usually found employment, often in domestic work under conditions very much inferior to those usually associated with such service. Since 1901, too, Acts of Parliament for the regulation of street trading have done a great deal for the good of young children, and especially girls.

Great changes also took place in the education of the girls of the middle classes. This section of the people had been increasing in numbers and importance continuously throughout the eighteenth century; and there was a growing tendency for the wives of merchants and shopkeepers to separate themselves from the work of their husbands, in which in earlier centuries they had usually shared. Now a stigma begins to be attached to trade; to live over the shop is looked down upon and a suburban house becomes fashionable. Even when the housewife still lives at the shop she keeps away from the business, and in some cases begins to give herself the airs and graces which she associates with the gentry; just as Mrs. Varden does in *Barnaby Rudge*. This separation from business meant that the wives were no longer capable of carrying on their husbands' businesses in case of necessity, as they had been up to the eighteenth century; while a plentiful supply of domestic servants made household work unnecessary both for the wives and their daughters.

At the same time increasing wealth and a rise in

the standard of comfort caused a steady rise in the age of marriage, at a time when middle-class mothers and daughters were left with but little to do that was useful. Some of the wives found vent for their energies in the work of the household, to the discomfort of all concerned; others attended to the affairs of the poor at home or the heathen abroad, after the fashion of Mrs. Jellyby, who was so enthusiastic in the matter of cultivating coffee and educating the natives of Borrioboola Gha. The daughters waited at home until marriage came to them, or until they became what were unkindly known as "confirmed old maids," many of whom worked zealously for the benefit of the poor and the oppressed, as generations before their predecessors had taken the veil and become nuns. But in all these cases the women had lost their economic independence, they had become in a measure parasites dependent upon their fathers or husbands; and in this respect they were more to be pitied than their poorer sisters who were working long hours in the factories or at home. And unless marriage brought happiness and prosperity their lot was harder still, for they had no means of supporting themselves when the necessity arose.

Athletics for girls was quite unthought of at this time, and these young ladies occupied themselves in cultivating manners and deportment, and the "graces and accomplishments" they trusted would render them pleasing in the eyes of the men they hoped to marry. "Women," says a woman writer of the time, "are something like children, the more

they show they need support, the more engaging they are; in everything that women attempt, they should show that they are conscious of dependence." Social intercourse, with its visits and tittle-tattle, and card-parties, and absurd conventions, occupied a considerable portion of these ladies' time; intellectual attainments were almost completely neglected. Even Marion Evans was fain to publish her *Scenes from Clerical Life* and succeeding works under a man's name. This was the age of samplers and fancy work, of embroidery and antimacassars, of tight lacing and crinolines. Physical exercise was entirely neglected. No wonder the age produced the colourless, anæmic women so ready to faint and cry whom we meet so frequently in the pages of Dickens and Thackeray.

The main cause of this was the inferior education given to girls at this time. Something has already been said on the subject in a previous chapter. Learning was looked upon as unladylike; one young lady who was rash enough to learn Latin in order to help her father was looked upon as a reproach to all who knew her. "Everything was taught in the inverse ratio of its true importance," says a lady writer of the period; "at the bottom of the scale were morals and religion, and at the top were music and dancing." We may gather some idea of the young ladies' seminaries and boarding schools of the time from the pages of the novelists of the period; the opening pages of *Vanity Fair* give us some idea of the life at Miss Pinkerton's Academy for young ladies on Chiswick Mall.

But while middle-class daughters were suffering in these ways, their brothers were forging ahead. The interest taken in education caused a great revival in the work of the public and endowed schools. When the boys and their schoolmates entered the house they brought into it a breath of freedom which their sisters necessarily felt. A reaction set in against the restrictions surrounding the girls' lives and the narrowness which enveloped them. They began to desire a better education, a real education that would make them more independent and would fit them for some wider sphere of usefulness in the world, and their desire was granted them. In 1848 Queen's College for women was founded in London, in 1849 Bedford College followed. Other colleges and schools were established; a Girls' Public Day School Company founded schools for girls of the public-school type; Girton College was opened at Cambridge in 1872, the first of a number of colleges established at Cambridge and Oxford. Various examinations were thrown open to girls and women as well as to boys and men; and very soon the girls and women were showing themselves capable of competing on equal terms with boys, and were holding their own in all subjects.

Now in the case of boys these examinations had a clear objective, for they were the means by which the boys qualified to enter the various professions. When girls showed that they too were qualified for entrance it naturally followed that they desired to take their place in these professions also, alongside their brothers and their friends. This step therefore

followed, and by degrees the professions were opened to women as well as men. The spread of schools for girls and infants made teaching an important woman's vocation; the work of Florence Nightingale and her band of devoted nurses in the Crimean War showed that the nursing profession was one in which women excelled, and trained nurses replaced the Sairey Gamps and Betsy Prigs of the preceding era. In 1874 a school of medicine for women was opened in London, two years later an Act of Parliament enabled qualified women to be placed on the Medical Register, and women soon became important members of the medical profession. Since 1895 there have been women factory inspectors; women inspectors share in the work of inspecting schools under the Board of Education; many women are engaged in various branches of the Civil Service, such as poor law administration, prisons, factories and workshops, labour exchanges, and national health and insurance; as well as public and private libraries, and in the various branches of Post Office activities. They are to be found in all branches of local government work, and in businesses of all kinds: banking, accountancy, insurance, architecture, photography, printing and bookbinding, and so on. They play an important part in literature, in journalism, in the various arts and crafts, and in music and the drama. Indeed, it is impossible to continue the enumeration, and we may content ourselves with a table from the census of 1911, given on the next page, which deals with just a few of the many professional activities in which women are now engaged:

Occupation	Women Engaged			
	Total	Unmarried	Married	Widowed
Itinerant Preachers, Scripture Readers, and Mission Workers	5,958	4,979	664	315
Monks, Nuns, and Sisters of Charity	7,555	7,513	—	42
Law Clerks	2,159	2,112	30	17
Physicians, Surgeons, and Recognised Practitioners	477	382	76	19
Dentists and Dentists' Assistants	250	179	51	20
Veterinary Surgeons	2	—	—	2
Midwives	6,602	1,085	3,371	2,146
Sick Nurses and Invalid Attendants	77,060	54,203	8,496	14,361
Subordinate Medical Services	3,308	2,473	535	300
Teachers, Lecturers, etc.	183,298	168,098	11,557	3,643
Others connected with Education	3,985	3,382	241	362
Authors, Editors, Journalists and Reporters	1,756	1,157	411	188
Engaged in Scientific Pursuits	145	120	20	5
Others Engaged in Literature	3,788	3,452	168	168
Painters, Sculptors, Artists	4,202	3,459	574	169
Architects	7	7	—	—
Engravers	153	134	15	4
Photographers	5,016	4,237	662	117
Musicians, Singers, and Teachers of these	24,272	19,912	3,096	1,264
Actresses	9,171	5,259	3,540	372
Art, Music, Theatre Services, etc.	3,156	2,235	629	292

After the services of women in the war, the remaining professions opened their closed doors to them, and they can now practise, and are actually practising, as solicitors and barristers.

CHAPTER XIV

CHANGES IN SOCIAL LIFE

THE changes that took place during the nineteenth century were so many and so varied that it is difficult, in the space at our disposal, to do more than outline the most important of them. Previous chapters have pictured for us some of the horrors of the earliest years, when the century was still held in the traditions of the eighteenth century. But its closing years and the opening years of the twentieth century were very different ones indeed, and though there is still much in the way of improvement for us to hope for and try to bring about, it is certain that, in comparison with earlier centuries, the closing decades of the nineteenth century were in very many ways a fortunate period for girls to be living in.

In a previous chapter we spoke of the eighteenth century as a century of brutality; we might well speak of its successor as the century of humanitarianism. It is true that its opening years were among the most terrible for little children in the history of England; but by its closing years very much care and attention were being paid to them, parents helped to make their children's lives happy in a way that many parents had never done before; *real* wages rose throughout the period and brought comforts to the average family to a greater extent than ever before; the State continued to intervene in order to

prevent the overwork and illtreatment of children, even going so far as to invade the home of the private citizen (that home of which it is sometimes said that "every Englishman's house is his castle") in its efforts to make sure of the protection and happiness of the little ones. One of its last efforts in this direction has been an Act of Parliament of 1908 which forbids children under fourteen years of age to enter a public-house, even when in company with their parents. Earlier in the century parents and employers were firm believers in Solomon's maxim of "Spare the rod and spoil the child"; children were beaten and repressed at home, the cane and birch rod were a necessary part of the school outfit, young people were beaten by their masters and overseers when at work. To-day, fortunately, all this has changed for the better; and in addition children have many opportunities of education and recreation which their predecessors never had.

We might also very well call this century a century of social reform. From the days of the Factory Acts onward, there were persistent efforts at reform in many directions. There lived in Britain throughout this century a large number of philanthropists, who worked hard to improve the conditions of life of the poor. It is impossible to give their names here; we have already mentioned some of them in connection with their special tasks, but we may mention once more the efforts of Dickens. Little children's sufferings appealed to Dickens very much, possibly because his own childhood had been a very miserable one, and he was always ready to take up the cudgels on their behalf. Here is a simple picture of the life

of the poor in Bleeding House Yard, as seen by Mr. Plornish in *Little Dorrit*: "There were the girls and their mothers a-working at their sewing or their shoe-binding, or their trimming, or their waistcoat making, day and night and night and day, and not more than able to keep body and soul together after all—often not so much. There was people of pretty well all sorts of trades you can name, all wanting to work, and yet not able to get it." In *Oliver Twist* Dickens pleads for the poor parish boy, and paints the dangers that beset the poor *gamins* of the London streets; in *Nicholas Nickleby* he shows up the horrors of private adventure schools; *Bleak House* has its picture of poor Joe, and *Old Curiosity Shop* of Little Nell.

We could also term this century the century of democracy. Once the reactionary period that followed the war with France had worn itself out, there came great extensions of the franchise in four stages, 1832, 1867, 1884, and 1918, which have given the vote to practically all men over twenty-one years of age, and to women who are over thirty, and no doubt there will soon be an extension which will place women on an equality with men in this particular. Voting by ballot (1872) and Acts to prevent bribery and other corrupt practices at elections have also made the old-fashioned election a thing of the past. Women have now entered Parliament and are taking a large share in all departments of public life, sitting on various local government boards and committees, and serving on juries as well. How great a change this is may be realised from the fact that so short a time ago as 1836 there was a

debate in the Commons and a motion carried to allow women to attend as visitors to hear debates in the House, after which the House refused to vote the four hundred pounds necessary to prepare a separate visitors' gallery for them. When this gallery was finally prepared, it was shut off from the House by an iron grille.

A century of democracy must also be a century of education, for it is above all things necessary that all who share in the country's government should be fittingly educated. The right to share in the government of the country is at once a privilege and a responsibility, and all girls should strive to understand the history of their country, seeing that ultimately they will be citizens responsible for its acts. We have already traced the steps by which education became accessible to everybody during this century; one reason for its spread was the extension of the franchise: "It is necessary," said Sir Robert Lowe, in introducing considerable alterations in the system of payment of educational grants in 1861, "to educate our masters." But the schools, elementary and secondary, were not the only sources of education, great extensions were made in many other directions. Especially was it necessary to consider the education of older persons who had lived too soon to enjoy the advantages that were now arising. Dr. Birkbeck, a physician of Glasgow and London, did much to promote the development of Mechanics' Institutes, which gave a general and technical education to young working people, and added facilities in the shape of popular lectures and lending libraries; the Young Men's, and later the

Young Women's, Christian Association worked in the same direction. All these facilities for reading and lectures and intelligent social intercourse were very much to the good. In 1850 a Public Libraries Act enabled town councils to establish public libraries and museums, and levy a small rate for their upkeep. These aids to education continued to increase throughout the century; popular penny science lectures did much to extend and popularise scientific knowledge; before the century closed University Extension Lectures were bringing some of the benefits of university education to the people of the towns. Other organisations have helped; there are now widespread opportunities for evening education, and the Workers' Educational Association is bringing university education within the reach of all.

One hindrance to knowledge at the beginning of the century was the heavy tax on newspapers, which was levied by the Government, not for the sake of revenue, but because the Government dreaded revolutionary movements. In 1836 there was a reduction in the Stamp Duty on newspapers, and many new papers were published; before this time the only newspapers outside London were weekly ones, and a daily paper cost sevenpence a day. The removal of the duty altogether, and the abolition of the tax on paper in 1861, made possible the publication of cheap literature of all kinds, good and bad, while developments in printing and photography have made pictures more easily reproducible, so that to-day pictures are a feature of all newspapers and the chief feature of some. One of the best results of this extension of a reading public has been

the production of cheap editions of the works of the greatest authors in British and world literature, reproductions which are still being continued to-day by enterprising publishers.

This century was also a century of wonderful developments in science. Many of these have already been mentioned in our pages. Developments in transport meant facilities for obtaining food from all parts of the world, as well as ease and rapidity of travel, with its possibilities of emigration to new lands. The repeal of the Corn Laws, 1846, inaugurated an era of cheap and plentiful food, which made real wages much higher, and as the food came largely from abroad it added to trade in the interchange, while making the country dependent on foreign supplies for its food. Science, too, introduced new methods of food preservation. Large quantities of food began to be preserved by tinning or drying; at a later date food preservation by keeping natural products at low temperatures in refrigerators made it possible to bring meat and other substances in a raw condition from all parts of the world. Marketing is a very different thing nowadays from what it was two hundred years ago. Transport facilities mean that the shopkeeper need no longer keep big supplies of common articles in stock, for he can order whatever is wanted and be sure of receiving it very quickly; there are shops everywhere and the fair has passed away long ago, while in most cases the market is disappearing or is being retained as a series of shops. Even the smaller shops of single owners are disappearing before the great companies, with their multitude of shops in towns and even villages; and

in the largest towns the great stores are becoming universal providers. Much shopping can now also be done by post or telephone. One very important development of the nineteenth century in this connection is the rapid growth of the Co-operative movement, in which very many women are interested. Starting in its modern form in Rochdale in 1844, the Co-operative movement now embraces, with members and their families, one-third of the population of the British Isles. The movement has two distinct ideas: (*a*) co-operation in consumption and (*b*) co-operation in production; but although the second idea was the one particularly aimed at by the founders of the movement it is the first which has developed the more rapidly. The principle involved in it is that a number of consumers join together as a Co-operative Society to establish a shop from which they purchase the goods they require, so as to get these goods more cheaply and at the same time share in the profits made by their sale, these profits being returned to them in the form of dividends. These societies have since 1863 established a Co-operative Wholesale Society, which manufactures and distributes a very large proportion of the goods sold in the Co-operative retail stores.

Another very important result of scientific work was the attention which began to be paid to sanitation. It is almost impossible for us with our well-kept streets and ventilated buildings to realise the state of the towns as late as 1850. In the older towns the ground was becoming more and more polluted with dirt and filth as time went on; little or no attempt was made to deal with the problems in

sanitation which arose from the great increases in population in the industrial centres. The water supply, which can be a fertile source of disease, was in most places hopeless; people were still drawing their supplies of drinking water from contaminated wells; and there was little attempt to remove waste and dirt from the neighbourhood of the houses. A Commission which inquired into the health of towns in 1845 found that scarcely one out of fifty towns had good drainage, while in forty-two the drainage was decidedly bad. Streets were rarely or never cleaned, in many districts no water was laid on, and the usual sources of supply were insufficient if not positively dangerous. The result was that the death rate increased considerably in the large towns between 1830 and 1850. Typhus fever, a dirt disease, was present in many towns every year; small-pox recurred at frequent intervals; worst of all, cholera came and claimed many victims. There was a cholera visitation in 1832, when over 50,000 persons died, and a second one in 1847. You may read something of this in Kingsley's *Two Years Ago*. It was fear of cholera that helped to frighten the Government into action, for "panic is the parent of sanitation." Boards of Health were set up, and soon sanitary measures were adopted with good results. Yet, although with the rapid increase of industrialism many villages were becoming towns in one generation, there was no Town Planning Act until 1909 to control the conditions under which these towns were so rapidly growing.

One important measure for better health was the care taken to provide a pure and sufficient water

supply, for there is nothing of greater importance to health than cleanliness. Manchester now draws its stores of water from Lake Thirlmere in the Lake District, Liverpool from Lake Vyrnwy, and Birmingham from the Elan Lakes in Central Wales. In 1846 and 1878 Acts of Parliament enabled the local authorities to establish public baths, wash-houses and drying grounds, and now in almost all the large towns there are facilities of this kind, and also opportunities for girls and boys to learn to swim.

With sanitation went also the problem of the housing of the poor. It was estimated that in Manchester something like one-tenth of the population were living in damp and gloomy cellars; slum areas were frequent in practically all the towns. Many improvements have been made in this connection, and many slums have been cleared away; but there is still much to be done, and in this instance the country is as bad as the town, though the country is saved by its abundance of fresh air. But better houses, and also better transport facilities by railway, tramcar, 'bus and tube, are doing something to take the workers away from the neighbourhood of the factories to the outer fringes of the towns and to gardens and purer air. Yet the census of 1911 showed that of 100,000 tenements occupied by private families in England and Wales, 3207 consisted of one room, 8314 of two, and 13,948 of three rooms only.

Better-class homes are now full of comforts unknown even to the wealthiest of early days. Articles of food, such as tea, coffee, cocoa, sugar, the various kinds of dried fruits, and semi-tropical fruits such as

oranges, lemons, and bananas, have become commonplaces in homes in which eighty or a hundred years ago they were comparative luxuries. Between 1784 and 1790 the duty on tea was reduced from three-and-fourpence to sevenpence per pound, with the result that the annual consumption was raised from five to fourteen and a half million pounds.

So great are the facilities for obtaining food products to-day, that in the upbringing of children there is probably more to be feared from wrong feeding than from under-feeding, for the ease with which cooked foods of all kinds can now be bought may tempt mothers to give their babies unsuitable kinds of food, instead of food fitting for the age of the children. Home comforts have also multiplied in other directions. Soap is plentiful; and we can scarcely realise what it must have meant to live in the days before matches. Improved lighting is one of the features of the century; gas was used as an illuminant about 1810; the discovery of paraffin about 1847 revolutionised the lighting of the home; since then gas and electricity have come into fairly general use and make us wonder however our forefathers managed with their snuffy candles and farthing dips. These sources of light and heat, too, are also being widely employed for cooking and for industrial purposes.

One splendid result of all these and other improvements has been that the life of the average person has been lengthened; as we say, people have now *a greater expectation of life* than formerly. The rate of mortality, especially among little children, has also been lessened very considerably. In 1850 the average

mortality per thousand for all persons was 21.7; in 1920 it had fallen to 12.4.

There is no more wonderful story in the history of the nineteenth century than the story of the ways in which the scientists have brought their knowledge to bear upon cases of injury and disease. Prevention is better than cure, and while the doctors have been striving their utmost to lighten the burdens of the sick and afflicted, attempts have also been continually in progress to *prevent* sickness and disease by discovering and removing its causes. One of the most important aids to the prevention of disease was undoubtedly the great movement for sanitation of which we have already spoken; many people, indeed, claim this as the greatest factor of all.

One of the worst diseases of the eighteenth century was smallpox. It was always present in England; it caused a large number of deaths each year; it was a peculiarly loathsome form of disease which left hideous traces behind it upon those who suffered from it and survived it. To-day it occurs but rarely, and then, thanks to that isolation of the infected persons which is one of our best methods of fighting infectious diseases, is usually stamped out very quickly. Vaccination also is in common use as a precaution against it. This originated through the work of a young West-country doctor named Edward Jenner (1749–1823). He was struck by the fact that a young dairymaid who came to him for advice assured him that she was immune from smallpox because she had already suffered from cowpox, incurred as a result of her occupation. People at this time were actually undergoing inoculation with

smallpox in order that they might have the disease in a mild form only, and so become immune from future severer attacks. Jenner argued that cowpox was a form of smallpox which had become modified and rendered less harmful through its presence in the cow; and he experimented in the production of a vaccine lymph from cows or calves which should act without serious harm on the human body, and yet confer a high degree of protection against smallpox for some time after its application. In the early days of vaccination many extravagant claims were put forward as to its worth, and there was not always sufficient care in the way in which the operation was performed; scientists would not now claim that the effect of one inoculation with vaccine would last a whole lifetime, or that it must necessarily act as a preventative; many persons are opposed to vaccination altogether. But whatever the cause, the fact remains that smallpox has nearly disappeared; and it is now the exception and not the rule to meet a person whose face shows the effects of an attack of the disease. Whereas the number of deaths per 10,000 from smallpox in the decade 1871–80 was 2.3, in the decade 1891–1900 it was only 0.1; the corresponding figures in scarlet fever were 6.5 and 1.6; in tuberculosis 28.6 and 20.0; in phthisis 22.9 and 13.9. Very much has still to be done to mitigate the evils of these last two terrible scourges.

Another wonderful scientific investigator in the regions of disease was the famous Frenchman, Louis Pasteur (1822–1895), who turned his attention among other things to an investigation of the causes of rabies or hydrophobia, and the production of a sub-

stance—an anti-toxin, as it is called—which should prevent the development of the disease if injected into a patient who had been bitten by a mad dog. The result of his efforts has been that many lives have been saved; while care in the prevention of the spread of the disease by muzzling regulations and isolation of suspected dogs has practically stamped out rabies in Britain.

Many anti-toxins for other diseases have been discovered, and diseases like diphtheria and typhoid fever are now treated in this way. In former days the deaths from diseases of soldiers engaged in war were very great indeed; in recent wars the use of anti-toxins and the precautions of isolation, disinfection, provision of a pure water supply or a supply that has been chemically purified, and other such methods, have reduced the mortality from these causes very considerably.

In the course of their researches scientists have taught how large a part is played by animals and insects as carriers of disease; plagues of the Black Death type have their infection conveyed to human beings from rats, which may themselves be infected from other rats by means of fleas; fleas, lice, flies, and other insects, are indeed fertile carriers of disease, and this emphasises once more the great importance of cleanliness. One English scientific investigator, Sir Ronald Ross, working in India, has shown that malarial fever is carried by means of the mosquito; and as the larvæ of the mosquito live in marshy places, drainage has been a means of rendering many malarial districts habitable. Yellow fever, too, is a mosquito-conveyed disease, and it is

a knowledge of this, and effective work in mosquito extermination, that have made possible the completion of the Panama Canal by the engineers of the United States. The previous French attempt failed from the great loss of life from yellow fever and malaria among the workers.

Surgery has made great strides forward, thanks to the discovery of anæsthetics, which have rendered many more and very difficult operations possible, and to the antiseptic dressing of wounds, which has practically removed the former great danger of blood poisoning and mortification of the wound which made operations so dangerous a matter. The use of chloroform we owe to the patient research of Sir J. Y. Simpson; antiseptic dressing to Lord Lister and other scientists who have continued his work. It was said at the close of the nineteenth century that "Listerism" had saved more human lives than all the wars of the century had sacrificed. He insisted on the careful disinfection of everything that came near the wound and the adoption of an antiseptic dressing which would exclude bacteria from the wound, and so allow the tissues to heal naturally. Now there are various kinds of anæsthetics in use, some of which allow of local operations being performed without complete unconsciousness; dentistry owes much to the use of anæsthetics, fortunately so, for the care of the teeth is a very important matter; while antiseptic surgery is the common practice almost everywhere. The recent discoveries of radium, X rays, and other rays, have also been utilised by the doctors and surgeons, and have proved of great value.

At the same time the care of the sick has improved considerably. Our hospitals are institutions of which we may all well be proud, and we have spoken of the splendid record of the nurses in the great war; it is equally important to remember the great services they render daily and hourly in hospital and in home

DRESS IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY
(In the Park)

throughout the days of peace. Greater still is the change that has come over the care of the insane and feeble-minded. There is no darker picture in the story of eighteenth-century brutality than its treatment of the insane, who were beaten, bound and chained, and subjected to all kinds of indignities at the hands of their keepers. Great improvements have now been made in the conduct of asylums, and

eminent authorities on mental diseases are devoting themselves to the problem of the care of the insane and the causes and prevention of insanity.

In no matter have changes been more pronounced than in the matter of dress. In earlier days it was possible to tell approximately what persons' positions were by the dress they wore. In the eighteenth

DRESS IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY
(At the play)

century the artisan was at once recognised by his knee-breeches, coarse worsted stockings, and apron; the farm labourer by his smock frock; the footman by his livery; and the doctor by his walking-stick with its knob at the top containing disinfectant. Now the only persons wearing a distinctive dress are the clergy, pageboys, nurses, footmen; and soldiers, sailors, policemen, and the many other public servants, who use special forms of dress associated with their callings.

Women's dress tends always to change very rapidly in accordance with the dictates of fashion. At the end of the eighteenth century, and in the early days of the nineteenth, their outdoor dress was a loose plain skirt with a very high waist, and for head-covering a coal-scuttle bonnet and veil. When in the house they affected the same simple skirt with a low bodice and short sleeves, with which they wore long gloves or mittens. A common fashion in hair-

DRESS IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY
(In the home)

dressing was to surround the face with short ringlets. Towards the middle of the nineteenth century the crinoline came in, and with an enlarged skirt the bonnet was reduced in dimensions. The hair was now worn with long ringlets at the sides of the face. By 1854 the crinoline had assumed large dimensions; one wonders how ladies got up again when they fell down, or how they made room for companions when seated in a coach. But the crinoline gave way to the pretty muslin dresses and coquettish hats we usually associate with the name of Dolly Varden; and with

the entrance of girls into athletics came simpler and more sensible forms of dress and the abolition of tight lacing. It is certain that the crinoline and the bicycle could never have gone well together. So changes continued until they come within the

THE CRINOLINE
Compare the smallness of the hat

knowledge of the reader, and we reach the hobble skirts and the V-necked blouses of the twentieth century. There are few more interesting pastimes on a rainy day than to turn over the leaves of an old family album, or the pages of early copies of the *Illustrated London News* or *Punch* and study the fashions there.

With the improvements in education has gone

also a great improvement in public morals. Many offences which were frequent at the beginning of the nineteenth century have almost disappeared; drunkenness is becoming much rarer; and people generally tend to take their amusements in more rational ways. The general tone of literature, of the theatre, and of amusements generally is rising. On the other hand, the vice of betting seems to be increasing.

One of the happiest results of the rapid improvements in transport during the century has been that it has brought an annual holiday or change of some kind within the reach of a very large proportion of the people. Very many families are now able to spend a week or a fortnight at the seaside and indulge in the sea-bathing, which was first popularised by the visits of George III. and his family to Weymouth. The spread of education, too, has made it possible for travellers and holiday-makers to use their holidays, and indeed all their leisure time, to much greater advantage than was formerly the case. Girls' clubs, co-operative travel and other associations are also giving girls very much better opportunities of employing their leisure time to good advantage than their predecessors enjoyed; while among the latest inventions associated with travel must be named the aeroplane.

CHAPTER XV

WOMEN'S WORK IN THE GREAT WAR

THE years preceding the outbreak of the Great War were remarkable ones in the history of English women. During these years many of them were demanding that they should be placed on an equality with men in matters of public life, and this demand was especially centred in the claim for the right to vote. Suffragette associations were formed, and "militant" suffragettes demonstrated in many more or less violent ways their intention of forcing Parliament to grant them this right. In the midst of the struggle came the shock of the war, and during the four years' struggle the women of England established their right to equality by the work they did in all kinds of ways to help their country in the contest, while to many of them the war brought bitter pain and suffering in the loss of those dear to them.

The immediate result of the outbreak of war was that very many women and girls lost their employment; for much foreign trade was stopped at once and many luxuries were dispensed with by the home population. In London alone 40,000 women were thrown out of work, but the industry which was hit hardest was the Lancashire cotton trade, which suffered in all ways; there was less demand for cotton goods, and export of goods and import of raw materials were alike hindered by war conditions. Altogether in

September 1914 190,000 women industrial workers were unemployed; there were still 39,000 in this condition in the following February. After that the demand for labour in many kinds of work directly and indirectly associated with the war absorbed those who were unemployed. A Government Report

DOING MEN'S WORK IN WARTIME
Wheeling coke at a gas-works

on Women in Industry[1] tells us that "in the second half of 1915 unemployed women were rapidly absorbed in munition factories, and in January 1916 in industry proper the number of women had already increased by over a quarter of a million, of whom about one-half were employed in the metal and

[1] Report of War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry (Cmd. 135). This chapter owes much to the valuable information contained in that report.

chemical trades. From this time onward the figures of female employment rose steadily, until in July 1918 the total number of occupied women had, according to Board of Trade figures, increased by twenty-two and a half per cent.," or from 5,966,000 to 7,311,000. It is impossible to gauge exactly the number of women who became wage-earners for the first time as a result of the war, but the number is certainly more than 800,000, and this figure does not include those women who were engaged in domestic work at home, or in other unpaid work. The greatest increase was, of course, in industries associated with the production of munitions, but other industries also were largely affected, as the following table shows:

Trades	Estimated Number of Females Employed in July 1914	Estimated Number of Females Employed in July 1918	Difference Between Numbers Employed in July 1914 and July 1918	Percent. of Females to Total Work-people Employed		Estimated Number of Females Directly Replacing Males in June 1918
				July 1914	July 1918	
Metal . .	170,000	594,000	+424,000	9	25	195,000
Chemical .	40,000	104,000	+64,000	20	39	35,000
Textile. .	863,000	827,000	−36,000	58	67	64,000
Clothing .	612,000	568,000	−44,000	68	76	43,000
Food, Drink and Tobacco	196,000	235,000	+39,000	35	49	60,000
Paper and Printing .	147,500	141,500	−6,000	36	48	21,000
Wood . .	44,000	79,000	+35,000	15	32	23,000
China and Earthenware	32,000	197,100	+93,000	4	10	62,000
Leather .	23,100					
Other . .	49,000					
Government Est'ments .	2,000	225,000	+223,000	3	47	197,000
Total . .	2,178,600	2,970,600	+792,000	26	37	700,000

From the outbreak of hostilities very much of the equipment and comfort of the men in the field and on the sea depended upon the work of the women and girls at home. The clothing, feeding and housing of the troops depended largely upon their exertions; the hospitals alone required large quantities of clothing, surgical dressings and other materials. A War Office Memorandum throws an interesting light on one aspect of this: "The present demands (June 1917) for razors average 90,000 per week. About half of these, except for the man who works the power hammer or the drop stamp, are never touched by anyone but women; women grinding, honing and stropping them. In 1914 Sheffield could not produce 30,000 razors a week for any needs; now, in addition to the 90,000 required by the Army, the Navy and India Office are supplied, while the nucleus of an export trade is kept alive."[1]

It is almost impossible to enumerate all the forms of employment in which women were engaged, but we may glance at some of them. Nursing at once became an all-important work, and the military nurses who were mobilised and waiting for hostilities were at once occupied with serious cases. Aid came to them from the Voluntary Aid Detachment (V.A.D.), which had been established in 1909 as part of the Territorial Army Scheme, and proved its use not only in actual service, but also as a training ground for additional nurses. In June 1914 the V.A.D. consisted of 1190 detachments with 57,714 members (men and women); by the end of the war it had become a vast organisation, including not

[1] Chapman, *Labour and Capital after the War.*

only nurses but also workers in many other directions: dispensers, motor-drivers, telephonists, shorthand typists, accountants, cooks, housemaids and waitresses; its members formed part of the staffs of military and naval hospitals; it was responsible for the care of many disabled and convalescent soldiers and sailors. British Red Cross contingents, too, were to be found on all fronts, and were doing wonderful work. The efforts of Florence Nightingale during and after the Crimean War had indeed borne good fruit, and it is impossible to overestimate the services of the great army of nurses called into existence by the war. At home, too, women doctors, of whom there were in all about a thousand on the Register, assumed new importance when men doctors went to the front to serve there.

As the war developed other organisations also were brought into existence. The pioneer corps of these organisations, the *Women's Legion*, was raised in the early days of the war. Motor driving, especially of ambulances, was one of the chief duties, and before the end of the war the number of drivers had reached 3500. The members of the *Women's Army Auxiliary Corps* were willing to undertake practically any work it was possible for a woman to do, with the result that many men were released for other services. Their work covered many branches of clerical work, various departments of transport, care of stores, telephone operations, and so on. The *Women's Royal Naval Service*, at one time numbering 6000 members, was connected with the Admiralty, and did work of many kinds in a way that was in keeping with the very high tradition of the British

Navy. Much useful work was also accomplished by the women who formed the *Army and Navy Canteen Board*, while the *Women's Royal Air Force* was associated with the important work of gaining and keeping the ascendancy in the air.

With the recognition of the shortage of munitions,

IN A MUNITION FACTORY
Turning shells on a lathe

many women were added to the workers in the metal trades. Between July 1914 and July 1918 the number of women in these trades rose from 170,000 to 594,000, of whom ninety per cent. were employed on work customarily done by men. The most important single trade was shell-making. The women were soon some sixty per cent. of the workers, and made the shell throughout from the roughing and turning of the bodies to the final gauging of the

completed shell. But women were also to be found in general engineering shops and shipyards, and in foundries and gun and aircraft factories; they also worked in large numbers in the chemical trades, especially in the production of explosives.

The *Queen Mary's Needlework Guild* gave to many

IN A MUNITION FACTORY
Fastening up ammunition boxes

women opportunities of work in sewing of various kinds, and in addition an extraordinary amount of sewing and knitting was done by private enterprise; indeed, the vast amount of work done, quietly and unassumingly, by women of all grades of society in this and in many other directions can never properly be estimated. There was, on the other hand, a considerable exodus of women from the clothing trades; in dressmaking alone no fewer than 20,000 women left the trade. The numbers increased, however, in the

boot and shoe trade and in tailoring, owing to the large requirements of the Government for the soldiers.

The various forms of labour associated with transport also occupied a large number of women. On the railways they were employed as booking clerks, telegraph operators, ticket collectors, cleaners, porters, labourers, etc.; on trams and omnibuses they acted as conductors, drivers and cleaners—at the end of 1918, in fact, women formed ninety per cent. of the conductors; they acted also as motor and van drivers to private firms, and as delivery agents of various food products, etc.

Agriculture, as we have seen in earlier chapters, was at one time a form of labour which found employment for many women and girls; and at the outbreak of hostilities it was still occupying 80,000 women as permanent workers and 50,000 as casual workers in Great Britain alone. During the war a *Women's Land Army* was formed, and in 1918 there were known to be 175,000 women engaged in agriculture in Great Britain, though the Board of Agriculture believes that the actual figure is largely in excess of this. "This large increase was doubtless due to the patriotic response of women of all classes to do work upon the land in the place of men on war service. Many educated women joined in the work, and it is an inference drawn by those watching over the movement that the presence of these educated women, coupled with the facts that the life is really healthy and the work is now much better paid, has caused farm work to be no longer regarded as a somewhat degrading occupation for women, but rather as one which is both honourable and useful.

ON THE LAND
Ploughing

ON THE LAND
Shovelling potatoes for the sieving machine

Another fact that has emerged is that there are certain kinds of farm work for which women have special skill, and in which they can become at least as efficient as the skilled men, if not more so. These are dairying, milking, the care of young stock, poultry keeping, and certain sides of market-garden work." Gardening should certainly not be omitted,

DOING MEN'S WORK IN WARTIME
Dipping leather in a tanyard

for in addition to the corps of women land workers many women worked hard upon their own allotments to aid in the production of food as a means of winning the war.

Domestic service, on the other hand, lost a large number of its workers; it is estimated that as many as 400,000 women and girls left domestic service, or work in the small workshops and workrooms in the dressmaking trades. According to the report of

the committee from which we have been quoting, skilled domestic servants, because of their generally superior intelligence and physical fitness, were in high demand in munition factories; and as a result the falling off in the supply of servants, which had begun before the war owing to the increase in clerical and other positions admitting of living out, was greatly accelerated. It adds that "many of the girls are, moreover, not expected to return, at least to living-in service, except as a last resort. They want more freedom and limited hours of work." Other work included police work, lamplighting, messenger work, carpentry in army hut construction, canteen work of all grades in munition and other factories, and in the Y.M.C.A. huts; while clerical work of all kinds absorbed a large number of women whose work is not included in the various departments of work already mentioned. They were to be found in large numbers in banks, in the offices of the various local government authorities, and in all departments of the Civil Service. They were also engaged in larger numbers as teachers, and were also permitted to become accountants, auditors, solicitors and barristers.

In all these branches of work women and girls showed great ability and proved their worth, with the result that their position as citizens was necessarily much improved, and not only was the franchise extended to include them, but many professions before restricted to men opened their doors to admit them as members. It is not possible here to enter into such interesting questions as the relative capacity of men and women workers in various kinds of

industries, or into the problem of women's wages as compared with men's, or even into the all-important question of the effect of much of this employment on women's health; those who wish to pursue these interesting questions further cannot do better than do so in the pages of the valuable report from which we have been quoting. What can be said here is that the work done by women during this period marks definitely the beginning of a new era in the whole question of women's place and share in English industrial and political life.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

An attempt has been made in the preceding pages to give readers an idea of the important part that women have played in the development of the life of the nation, and to help them at the same time to realise the great changes that have taken place during the progress of that development and the reasons why conditions to-day are what they are. But it is important that readers should realise and keep continually in mind that these changes have not come to an end; they are still taking place and will continue to take place. The study of history is, in fact, the study of changes; it is well always to remember that there is no such thing as a normal and unchanging state of affairs; the world is always in a state of change, and it is certain that changes will continue to come.

Thus one tendency of modern science is towards the invention and improvement of labour-saving contrivances; the difference between the conditions under which our great-grandparents lived and we live ourselves is really extraordinary, and many of these new contrivances are invented for the home. Hence the use of these things, coupled with the continued taking out of the home of many of the older household occupations which formerly occupied so large a portion of the housewife's time, and the abolition of many of the useless encumbrances

of the Victorian house, must mean that, in future, women who have the care of a household will find less work to do in the house than was formerly the case, and will therefore in all probability devote more of their energies to any matters outside the household in which they may wish to share. At the same time the rise in the standard of comfort, with its extension of the period of childhood and youth, and the consequent pushing back of the age of marriage, has left a clear interval of time between the completion of a girl's education and the date of her marriage, a period which will be increasingly occupied by her in industrial or commercial work. It would seem, therefore, that the share taken by women in public and business life is likely to increase rather than to lessen as time goes on.

It may be, too, that with the development of transport facilities and the increased use of electricity as a source of motive power, capable of easy distribution and of use in larger or smaller quantities as desired, there will be a check upon the growth of large towns, and the Britain of the future may become a Britain of decentralised industries in garden cities; in some industries with work carried on in smaller factories, and in others, possibly, with an improved system of domestic industry in which women will take a very important share.

Another matter of great importance at the present time is the question of our food supply. In the years between 1901 and 1913 something like seventy-eight per cent. of the wheat and forty per cent. of the meat used in the country were imported from abroad; and it was stated at the meetings of the

British Association, 1922, that while we produced ninety-five per cent. of the potatoes, milk, vegetables, and oats we needed, we only produced twenty per cent. of the wheat and cheese. In normal times the country only has about one hundred and twenty-five days' food supply in hand; so that the country is very largely dependent upon other countries for its food supply. One important source of this supply in the past has been the United States, but with the growth of large industrial areas there, and the great increases of population through the constant influx of immigrants, the food exports of the States to England are lessening considerably; and our country will either have to find new sources of imported food or produce more food at home. The tendency of the later nineteenth century was towards the formation of large farms; but attempts to increase home production may lead to the return of the smaller farmer and smallholder, and women may once again play a large part in agricultural work, as they did in the years of the war. The modern tendency towards shorter hours of labour may also be followed by extensions of food production in gardens and allotments; and as ninety per cent. of the land available for cultivation is already in use, greater supplies of food must largely come from more intensive methods of cultivation of the land.

Meanwhile, whatever may be true of the future, there are at the present time many interesting movements in the world of labour, both in England and in other countries, which may ultimately have a great effect upon industry. Many prominent persons in politics and in industry are suggesting that

the time is approaching for the establishment of some changed system of relations between employer and employed with a view to putting an end to the strikes and lock-outs which are so detrimental to England's industrial welfare, and so hopeless and wasteful a method of settling industrial disputes. One method capable of much development in this connection is the construction of an improved system by which arbitration could be introduced in such cases; at present the Government can intervene for this purpose only when both parties in the dispute are willing that it should intervene. But during the war control boards, consisting of representatives of both parties, governed the cotton and woollen industries with very great success, to the advantage of masters, workers, and the rest of the nation alike; and this success seems to suggest that much more could be done in this direction. In many industries, too, wages are now fixed by a joint board or committee of masters and workers in terms of a sliding scale fixed by the joint board and administered by them, wages being made to vary with the selling price of the manufactured commodity. The idea of a sliding scale of wages has become common to us as a result of the war, for when wages and prices were then in a state of considerable fluctuation bonuses were added in many cases to existing or modified wage scales, and the amounts of the bonuses were made to depend upon the fluctuations in the price of a group of ordinary necessary commodities, whose costs were taken as the basis of the index number on which the calculations were based. Reference has also been made in a preceding chapter to the

work of the Trade Boards, which fix the rates of wages to be paid in certain specified industries.

Another suggestion is that it would be well to give employees some direct share, apart from their wages, in the profits of the industry in which they are engaged, on the ground that this would increase their interest in the work that is being done, and so add to the success of the business. Quite a considerable number of attempts at this method of profit sharing in industry have been made; some have been successful, others the reverse. Much would seem to depend upon the character of the persons concerned, and upon the nature of the industry in which the attempt is made.

There is also the suggestion that it would be helpful if the workers were given some voice in certain portions of the management of the industry, by means of chosen representatives sitting on the boards of management of these industries or in other ways. An important development in this connection has resulted from the labours of a committee presided over by Mr. J. H. Whitley, and formed to consider the relations between employers and employed. This Whitley Committee recommended the establishment of a threefold structure comprising (1) National Joint Standing Industrial Councils for different industries, each containing representatives of the employers and of all sections and classes of the employed; (2) District Councils, with representatives of the trade unions and employers' associations concerned; and (3) Works' Committees, representing both management and workers. By means of these committees all prob-

lems arising in association with the industry, conditions of employment, wages, training of workers, improvements and inventions, utilisation of the practical knowledge and experience of the work-people, legislation affecting the industry, and so on, could be considered and much friction avoided, to the very great advantage of every business concerned.

Those who support these and similar developments claim that the added responsibility would be all to the good, as they would act as steadying influences on the workers and show them the great difficulties that exist in the control of business operations; it is asserted to the contrary that no one could hope to run a business successfully for very long on these lines. It may prove possible to introduce these ideas in matters which are little likely to cause friction, and then, if they prove successful, to extend them to other and more important matters also.

The developing science of psychology is also being utilised in the domain of industry, especially in America, in what is called scientific management. Careful tests, experiments, and observations are being framed and utilised to find out the work which each person can best do, so as to be certain that each is employed upon that task for which she is best fitted. Other experiments are being framed to ensure that these services are used to their maximum value by the elimination of useless bodily actions which add nothing to the worker's efficiency, yet add to her fatigue and even hinder the successful performance of her work. Hence endeavours are made to discover the best possible way of performing a task, and this method is then taught to all who

have the task to perform. Questions of tools and machinery are also considered; as well as problems of fatigue, overstrain, and so on. In these last matters very much valuable knowledge was gained in our own country by researches conducted among war workers, and the whole problem of scientific management is now engaging the attention of British psychologists and manufacturers.

Many industrial workers to-day are strongly opposed to these developments in scientific management on the ground that they tend to reduce the worker to a mere machine, forced to labour in a monotonous routine without thought or initiative, or any sense of achievement or joy in her work. They look upon many of the suggestions as cunning contrivances for speeding up the worker to the point of nervous and physical exhaustion, with the result that health is undermined, and the period of industrial activity and earning power lessened considerably. All these things are dangers which would have to be avoided by those who would introduce these new methods of work and control.

Another important matter for consideration is the general relation that should exist between women's and men's wages, and between the wages of women and girls. The inquiries made by the Government during the war show that women in almost all industries receive very much lower rates of payment than men. The average weekly earnings of manual-working women in 1914 have been estimated at not more than thirteen-and-sixpence, as against twenty-five-and-ninepence for men; in the scale of payment for Post Office employees, the rates of payment are

higher for men than for women, and the same applies almost universally. Many reasons have been given for the differences which exist between the wages paid to men and women who are engaged in the same branch of industry. One undoubted cause is the lack of industrial training for women, a cause which has operated since the Middle Ages, but could, one imagines, easily be removed, though there is always the difficulty that in very many cases girls spend only a portion of their life in industrial work, and leave the industry for married life just at a time when they are becoming most efficient as workers. There are still many branches of industry in which girls serve a long apprenticeship, often with little or no wages, as in the textile industries, millinery and dressmaking, or a short apprenticeship as shop assistants. The result of defective training is that women are employed in occupations or parts of occupations that demand less skill, and this again reacts against them by suggesting that in their case training is comparatively unnecessary.

Women, and girls too, are slower to organise themselves into combinations for the purpose of bettering their condition of work than men are. In the early days of the trade union movement there were combinations of women as well as of men, but they were usually short-lived, and never attained anything approaching full membership. This again may be due in part to the fact that girls and women have looked upon their work as incidental rather than as the main purpose of their lives, and in some cases to the fact that they have not been wholly dependent upon their earnings to the degree that men and

boys have. Hence in 1913 only 27.9 per cent. of the women engaged in the chief industries were in trade unions, and of these 72 per cent. were engaged in the textile industries. Miss Hutchins, in her work on *Women in Industry*, points out that in the weaving industry, where women outnumber men and are combined in a joint union of factory operatives with the men, there is a very complicated system of payment by piece rates, which requires the very skilled calculation and explanation of a union official acting on behalf of the workers. "A minute fraction of a penny per yard may make a perceptible difference in a woman's earnings." The success of this joint union shows that much improvement can be effected where men and women can be persuaded to work together in a joint union in pursuit of common interests; the work done in this and other joint unions is not confined to the problem of wages, but covers also the difficult question of the allotment of different kinds of work to the different sexes.

Many other reasons, too, might be adduced. Women's work generally is less appreciated than men's, and this prejudice tells against them; the greater physical strength of the average man helps him in many branches of industry, and thus the number of occupations in which women may engage is restricted, with a resulting over-supply of labour in these industries. Professor Cannan suggests that it would be easily possible to raise women's capacity as compared with that of men, and so increase their output considerably. He points out that as a rule girls do not have so much spent on them as boys, and thinks that if they were better fed and trained

their output would be increased. One result of the war has been a great improvement in the position of women in industry; whether this improvement will be permanent, or will pass away with the conditions that brought it about, time alone can show; but now that the question has been raised in this way, it is certain that more attention will be paid to the question of women's wages than was paid in pre-war days.

In the same way, the work done by women during the war caused a large amount of attention to be devoted to conditions of labour, and to the effects of employment on women's health. Many special investigations were undertaken, and much was done to improve the conditions under which women and girls were working, so as to prevent overstrain and fatigue and ensure the general good health and welfare of women workers. In 1914 women's hours of labour had remained almost the same as Parliament had fixed them forty years previously, and the effects of over-pressure and fatigue were soon visible in munition factories. Hence in 1916 came a Home Office order restricting the weekly hours of women and girls to sixty, and the formation by the Ministry of Munitions of a Welfare Department, whose duty it was to watch over the welfare of workers in as many ways as possible, always with the co-operation of the workers themselves in the management of these things. We are all sensitive to our surroundings, and can only work, or sleep, or eat to best advantage under congenial conditions. All that tends to make work less irksome is advantageous—as Shakespeare puts it, "the labour we delight in physics pain"—

and the object of the Welfare Department was to improve, where possible, factory conditions so as to enable all workers to do their best work. Thus supervisors might deal with such matters as canteens, cloakrooms, uniforms, lavatories, baths, and opportunities of recreation; they could deal with problems of irregularity, loss of time, selection of fitting kinds of employment, and consider complaints of various kinds; questions of ventilation, temperature, lighting, overcrowding, cleanliness, and drainage could be looked into to the advantage of all concerned; equally important was the opportunity afforded of giving advice on questions of health to working girls. All this was done as a voluntary matter on the part of the employer. Many employers, indeed, had already attended to the welfare of their workers in these ways, and had thus set the standard, and all concerned found that the results which followed from the adoption of welfare supervision proved both the necessity and the value of the measures taken.

These examples are sufficient to show that proposals are now under discussion which may produce important changes in matters and methods of industry, and that many problems still await consideration whose successful solution may do much as time goes on to alter our industrial methods, and possibly our mode of life. We have purposely refrained here, for example, from any consideration of the question of education in connection with trade and industry, which is a very important one if England is to retain her position as a leading industrial and commercial nation. But that industrial matters are becoming

increasingly important may also be realised from the fact that in Article XXIII. of the Covenant of the League of Nations the members of the League promise to endeavour to secure fair and humane conditions of labour in the countries concerned, and provision is made for the ultimate establishment of an international industrial code which shall bring about these better conditions. Such a provision as this seems to point to the time when there will be international agreements in industrial matters, as there have long been international agreements in matters political and commercial.

It is obviously impossible at the present moment to say exactly what the future of British industrial and social life will be; but it is perfectly safe to say that in the future, as in the past, the part played in it by British women and girls will be a very considerable one.

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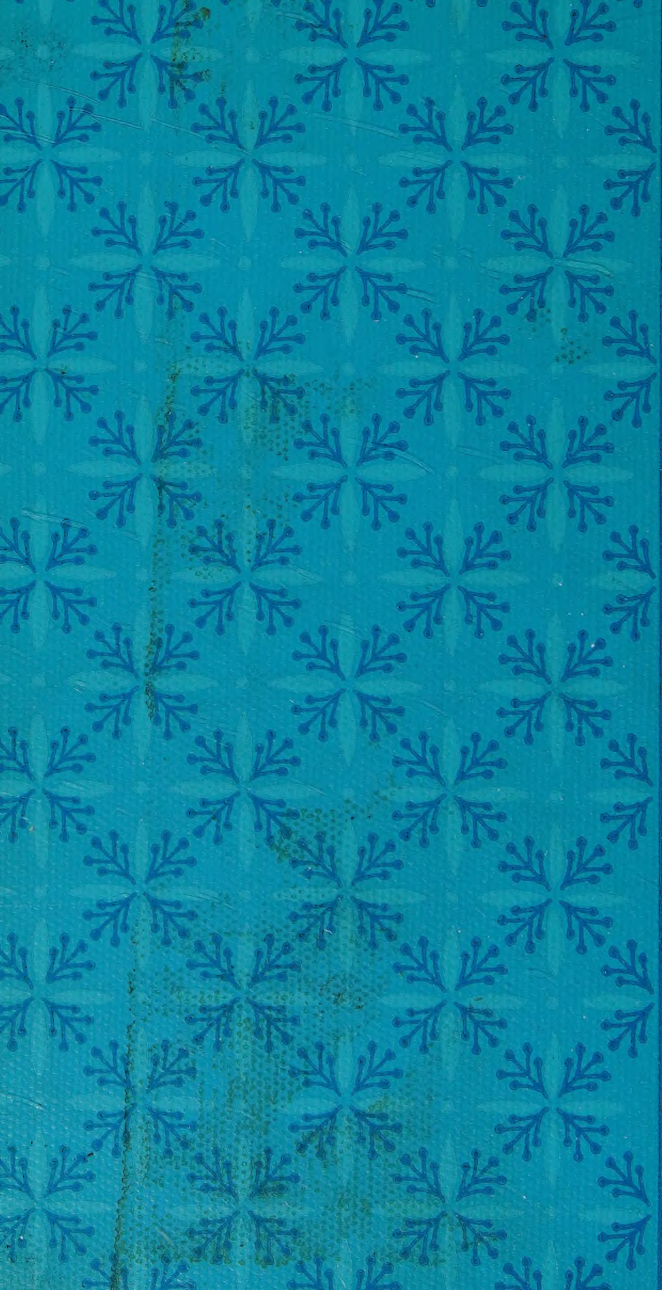
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